THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Michel Foucault's Anti-Humanism

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(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Arts

Philosophy

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Spring, 1985

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR Kevin O'Brien

TITLE OF THESIS Michel Foucault's Anti-Humanism

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED Spring, 1985

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Abstract

In *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault announced man's death, thus aligning himself with the anti-humanists. His anti-humanism is a rejection of that brand of philosophy which credits man with possessing a lucid cogito. He charges that, hitherto, philosophy has not adequately explained man. He points out that humanist philosophy is caught in a paradox; it posits man as both an empirical and a transcendental subject. Foucault shows that such an account of man cannot succeed. The human sciences, which share this conception of man, are equally in peril.

In his following book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault unveiled man's replacement. In the place of the cogito, Foucault offers discourse. It is discourse which lies at the origin of knowledge, and it is discourse which creates man. The humanist adage that 'man is the measure of all things', becomes 'discourse is the measure of all things'. But in this transition the shortcomings of Foucault's own account become evident. Discourse is saddled with the same paradox as the humanist's man. Foucault does not give an adequate account of man, nor can he. Having created a monism of discourse, Foucault cannot make the necessary distinctions which his project requires, namely, between truth and falsity, and between discourse and non-discourse. Foucault provides a necessary critique of humanist philosophy, but is unable to adequately provide its substitute.

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List of Abreviations

1. AK *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault.
2. DL "The Discourse on Language", Michel Foucault.
3. OT *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault.
4. PK *Power/Knowledge*, Michel Foucault.

I. Introduction

Michel Foucault is certainly an enigmatic figure. He is an anti-Hegelian, yet was a student of the eminent French Hegelian Jean Hyppolite. He is an anti-phenomenologist, yet is clearly indebted to Husserl and Heidegger and wrote an introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's *Le Reve et L'existence*. He chastises Kant for his philosophy of finitude, yet for his *These Complementaire* for the *Doctorat des Lettres* at the University of Paris he translated Kant's *Anthropologie du point du vue Pragmatique*, and provided notes and an introduction. He is an anti-humanist who rejects historical materialism. Although he was the head of a department of philosophy prior to his appointment to the *College de France* only one of his books resembles traditional philosophy. Before teaching philosophy in fact, Foucault gave courses on psycho-pathology. Foucault has written on a wide array of subjects, including: sexuality, prisons, madness and power.

Perhaps his title at the *College de France* gives the best indication of the unique character of Foucault's work. He was 'Professor of History and Systems of Thought'. Foucault is not a historian of ideas - a well known vocation within philosophy. He is concerned with how ideas get produced, and not with according them their appropriate historical niche. He is concerned with systems of thought, and not with philosophers. Whether Foucault is called a philosopher, or historian, or psychologist, his works are philosophicaly significant. Foucault writes about man,

knowledge, language and other subjects which exercise philosophers.'

'Hayden White's evaluation of Foucault's place in the philosophical tradition seems to indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of his work. He says,

> It seems safe to predict that the work of Michel Foucault will not attract the ardent interest of the Anglo-American community. Foucault works in the grand tradition of Continental European philosophy, the tradition of Leibniz, Hegel, Comte, Bergson and Heidegger, which is to say he is a metaphysician, however much he may stress his descent from positivist convention. (Hayden White, 'Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground', *History and Theory*. (12), 1973, p. 49.)

After his criticism of onto-theology, Heidegger would no doubt be slightly puzzled to see himself placed alongside of Hegel and Leibniz as a fellow metaphysician. It seems a questionable assertion that one is a metaphysician simply in virtue of not being a positivist. Nowhere does Foucault engage in the type of philosophy that concerned Leibniz, Hegel or Bergson. Comte does not belong on a list of metaphysicians, and Heidegger spent his entire career overcoming traditional metaphysics. A metaphysician must surely elucidate a theory of being, and nowhere does Foucault do that. As for Foucault the speculative philosopher (he is a "philosopher of history in the manner of Vico, Hegel, and Spengler."), a belief in the teleology of history is surely necessary to earn him that title. Yet Foucault goes to great lengths to chronicle the disruption of history. He expressly rejects all speculative history as humanist illusion. (See *The Order of Things*, pp. 328-335, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 11-15.)

One of the most bizzare characterisations of Foucault comes from Hilary Putnam.

> It may be helpful to descend from the abstract level at which we have been discussing and consider once more a relatively simple example. Consider the judgement that most people are prepared to make at most times, that peace is preferable to war. (Such judgements are never discussed by Foucault, just as they are never discussed by Swift, and for the same reason: both are *satirists*, only social folly interests them, not - when it exists - social sanity.) (Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 192.)

It is not difficult to pass for a satirist in Putnam's books. In fact though, Putnam is quite wrong about Foucault. His books abound with the kind of sensible judgements Putnam asks us to consider. Foucault tries to reveal the often obscure rationality of seemingly irrational judgements. Presumably also one must satirise to be a satirist, nowhere

The Order of Things was an instant success when it was published in 1966. There Foucault opposed the humanist notion that man is the measure of all things. That humanist idea invokes a conception of man which Foucault sets out to destroy. He particularly opposes humanist epistemology, in which all knowledge can be traced to an original and primary ego which is transparently given to itself. Essentially he opposes the Cartesian idea of the ego. In contrast to Freud and Lacan's idea of the ego, the Cartesian ego is a unity, it can know itself through and through. Foucault sides with Freud and Lacan against the Cartesians.

Humanist epistemology must always talk about something like justified true belief, since it always involves a potentially lucid cogito at the origin of knowledge. Foucault, on the other hand, does not discuss belief as he thinks a description of knowledge is possible without reference to a believer. Similarly justification is not discussed as that too requires the intimate involvement of the subject.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault tried to show how language could replace man. He tried to show how discourse could replace the cogito and still account for knowledge and truth. Knowledge becomes an event that happens to me. One no longer asks, 'How do I know', nor 'What am I doing when I am knowing'. Rather one asks, 'How is there knowledge in me'. Discourse makes us passive in relation to

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'(cont'd) does Foucault do that.

knowledge. Nor does one find a traditional theory of truth in Foucault. The traditional epistemological vocabulary is absent. Foucault talks instead about epistemes, discourse, history, knowledge without a subject, and therefore can be described as an anti-epistemologist.

The question of truth is irrelevant for Foucault's purpose of determining how statements are produced. I shall argue though, that the question of truth is relevant for his own work as an archaeologist. I think Foucault's archaeology fails because he cannot distinguish what is an artifact of discourse and what is not. I will argue that, if as Foucault says, truth is determined by discourse, he would have to know discourse before knowing what truly belongs to it. In that case though, there would be no need for archaeologists of Foucault's sort.

Anti-humanism is not limited to continental philosophy though, and Foucault is by no means the first to oppose the position that man is a sovereign cogito. Kuhn's notion of paradigm is strikingly similar to Foucault's notion of episteme, and has the same effect of decentering the subject. The behaviourist school of psychology is anti-humanist. Emphasising man's physiology, Gilbert Ryle and Wilfred Sellars, could also be called anti-humanists. There is even a similarity between Foucault's anti-humanism and Wittgenstein's denial of the thinking subject in the *Tractatus*.

At 5.631 in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein says, "The thinking, presenting, subject; there is no such thing." What is peculiar about man for Wittgenstein is not that he is a thinking, sovereign cogito. Like Foucault, he rejects the emphasis on interiority which characterises the cogito, and humanism in general. It is an interiority which stresses man's self-sufficiency. In the interior of his being man discovers not only his personal identity, but also the ground for truth, value and beauty. Man is the source of order in things.

Along with Foucault's explicit rejection of humanist epistemology, there is an implicit rejection of humanist psychology and history. He rejects ego psychology and continuist history. Humanist psychology conceives of man as possessing an intact ego, and of being completely in charge of his being. It is the belief that man can be understood apart from society and history. Indeed society and history only pervert man's true nature. The stress on introspection by humanist psychologists indicates a belief that in the interior of his being man will discover his true, pristine nature. I think that Foucault is right to reject this aspect of humanism for reasons I will outline later.

Continuist history is also rejected. Foucault declares that it is linked to a humanist account of the subject. The disruption of history reveals that there is no such subject. This is not a crucial point however. If we can in fact demonstrate continuity in history, and we probably can,

Foucault's project need not be abandoned. Some Marxists, for example, insist that history is continuous, but do not accept a humanist account of man.

All the forms of humanism make of man, as the saying goes, the measure of all things. Humanism is a great normalising force. It refuses to admit that there could be something other, whether the other is an object, another subject, God, or whatever. The other is reduced to the same and the order of things is preserved. All that which threatens man's hegemony is reduced to him and rendered harmless.[2] The cogito refuses any autonomy to that which is external to it. The possibility that man's ego is inherently and originally flawed is not entertained for a moment. The humanist dream is that knowledge, and more particularly self-knowledge, shall make us free and happy. We shall all be free and happy, and terribly, terribly normal in this best possible enlightened world.

Foucault's anti-humanism is not therefore an attack on the rejuvenation of 'humanist studies' which occurred in Europe during the Renaissance. Nor, of course, is he bewailing that same thing as some religious authorities when they attack 'secular humanism'. Foucault's anti-humanism

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[2]The terms 'other' and 'same' are standard in contemporary continental philosophy. Vincent Descombes says that the theme of the same and the other lies at the centre of contemporary French philosophy. It is a rejection of the " 'logic of identity' ...that form of thought which cannot represent the *other* to itself without reducing it to the *same*, and thereby subordinating difference to identity." (Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980, p. 75.)

belongs rather to the debate between Sartre and Heidegger in their respective essays, "Existentialism is a Humanism", and "Letter on Humanism". Sartre says,

> There can be no other truth to start from than this: *I think therefore, I exist*. There we have the absolute truth of consciousness becoming aware of itself. Every theory which takes man out of the moment in which he becomes aware of himself is, at its very beginning, a theory that confounds truth, for outside the Cartesian *cogito*, all views are only probable, you must have a firm hold on the true. Therefore, before there can be any truth whatsoever, there must be an absolute truth; and this one is very simple and easily arrived at; it's on everybody's doorstep; it's a matter of grasping it directly.

[3] Man becomes both *imago dei* and *homo faber*; the transcendental source of any truth whatsoever, and the being who fashions each empirical truth from his immanent position within the world. Man become the paradoxical "empirico-transcendental doublet" which Foucault rejects; a being whose empirical nature grants to him the ability to ground his transcendental ability to render that empirical nature completely lucid.

Foucault's position is close to Heidegger's criticism of Sartre. Heidegger agrees with Sartre that man stands out

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[3] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*. Philosophical Library Inc., New York, 1965. p. 51.

as a peculiar being among beings. However for Heidegger, and for Foucault too, the cogito cannot serve the purpose that Sartre determines for it. Truth does not reside in man. For Heidegger and Foucault, Sartres description of man as a sovereign cogito who gives himself an essence is unworkable. Heidegger offers Dasein as a more comprehensive alternative. What Foucault adopts from Heidegger, and which sets him apart from Sartre, is the belief that man has a relation to a source of truth outside of his cogito, and that man is immersed in history. Sartre's cogito is throughly atemporal and ahistorical. Heidegger criticises Sartre for deferring to traditional metaphysics and excluding time from Being. Like Foucault, Heidegger sees in Marx an appreciation for the historical determination of man's being.

> Because Marx by experiencing estrangement attains an essential dimension of history, the Marxist view of history is superior to that of other historical accounts. But since neither Husserl nor - so far as I have seen till now Sartre recognises the essential importance of the historical in Being, neither phenomenology nor existentialism enters that dimension within which a productive dialogue with Marx is possible.

Taking Heidegger seriously, Foucault sets out in *The Order of Things* to historicise man. Foucault's thesis is

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'Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978, p. 220.

that, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, language was the sufficient ground of truth. When language was no longer adequate as the ground of truth, man was born. It was therefore necessary that man make his appearance as a sovereign cogito; truth demanded no less. Man became the measure of all things in the process.

Provocatively Foucault heralds the death of man. But it is actually man conceived of as an empirico-transcendental doublet, whose extinction is predicted. According to Foucault we have entered an age where language is once again ready to serve as the ground of truth. It is time again for man to recede therefore. In *The Order of Things* Foucault chronicles the fortunes of language. He shows how man has been conceived of as a doublet, and how that conception harbors the seed of its own destruction. His polemic against the human sciences is directed against their obliviousness to the now discredited philosophy which underpins them.

Foucault's account of discourse begins the dialogue with Marxism which Heidegger deemed essential. But Heidegger also said, "For such a dialogue it is certainly also necessary to free oneself from naive notions about materialism, as well as cheap refutations that are supposed to counter it."[3] Heidegger thereby identifies the threat inherent in the dialogue with Marxism, namely, that one will lapse into materialism by trying to accommodate history. Perhaps this points to the failure of Foucault's project.

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[3]Martin Heidegger, Ibid., p.220.

The challenge is to refuse humanism without accepting materialism. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault claims that knowledge is neither the product of a creative subject, nor of the historical/material conditions of life. Knowledge is a product of discourse, which has no subject. Paradoxically Foucault posits the existence of knowledge without a knower. I do not think that Foucault successfully defends this position however.

In *The Order of Things* Foucault proposed to study the discourse on labour, life and language. He is therefore trying to expose the understanding we have of ourselves. Despite changes to his position, this remains the underlying aim of all of Foucault's works. In *The Order of Things* he destroys man as philosophy has traditionally understood him, but in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* man is recreated anew as the product of discourse.

Foucault does not believe that man can be understood in reference to his intentions, nor as the product of reinforced behaviour, nor of the material conditions of life. I think Foucault is correct in saying that all such attempts fail. I do not think that Foucault's alternative explanation of man, as a product of discourse which itself must be understood only on its own terms, succeeds either though. I think it is a noble effort which failed, but which along the way raised many interesting questions and cleared the ground for a new assault on the tradition.

In the following pages I intend to present Foucault's anti-humanism as it appears in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. His position is that language at one time obviated man and that we have now entered a similar era. I shall explain and criticise Foucault's attempt to replace man with discourse. I believe that Foucault failed in that attempt, and that therefore his anti-humanism is only partly justified. He knows what is wrong with the tradition, but cannot offer a workable alternative. To make that point I will draw on "The Discourse on Language", an essay appended to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and I believe, discordant with it.

II. The Absence of Man in the Classical Age

Foucault's investigation of the various ways man has understood himself since the sixteenth century prompted him to prophesise "the death of man". That is one reason why *The Order of Things* was so popular amongst the structuralists in the early nineteen-sixties. The anti-humanist position that Foucault held was common to them too. Significantly, although it is subtitled "An Archaeology of the Human Sciences", *The Order of Things* was to be originally subtitled "An Archaeology of Structuralism".

For his project in *The Order of Things* Foucault introduced the typically structuralist notion of 'episteme'. Alluding to Kant, Foucault alternately calls the episteme an "historical *a priori*". The implication is that, like Kant, he believes that there is a constraint on what can be known, but the constraints are historical in nature and not features of man's being. The decentering of man begins with the episteme. The episteme requires that we look outside of man's being for the origin of knowledge. Going beyond Kant, Foucault's task is not to provide another critique of man's reason to determine what is knowable, but rather to discover the historical basis which made knowledge possible. The search for this *episteme* requires a new way of looking at knowledge. Foucault no longer considers such criteria as rationality or objectivity as determining what has counted as knowledge. Those criteria always require the intimate involvement of a subject since they require that a subject

actively recognise the rationality or objectivity of knowledge. Foucault tries to account for knowledge without the active involvement of the subject however. Instead he seeks the grounding of knowledge in the *episteme*. He believes that such a grounding will reveal that the history of knowledge is not one of increasing progress and perfection, (an anti-humanist sentiment), but one of shifts and disruptions.

In *The Order of Things* Foucault attempts to discover the episteme in each of three periods. These are the Renaissance, the Classical period and the Modern age. The Renaissance covers the period between 1500-1650. The Classical age covers the period between 1650-1800. The Modern age covers the period between 1800-1950. These dates are only approximations of course.

During the Classical age language was a means of representing a world that contained an order independent of any act of the subject. Language did not order the world, the world already was orderly prior to language. Man did not create order, he merely clarified the order that was present. Man did this by the proper use of the method. Naturally language had to be suitable to the task, it had to be transparent and stable. The mirror created by language was efficacious as long as language did indeed represent the world, that is, was transparent and not opaque, and as long as language was stable. It was believed that language was equal to the task. That language was inherently flawed was

not a Classical position.

Investigation of man in the Classical age was limited to showing how man could be a wielder of signs. There was then, no investigation of mans's being intent on showing that it was from there that the veracity and efficacity of signs derived. Man was the locus but not the ground of representation. Classical thought aimed a determining the legitimacy of that locus. So, anticipating objections that people like Locke, Hume, Hobbes, and others did indeed investigate man, Foucault says,

> Man, in the analytic of finitude, is a strange empirico-transcendental doublet, since he is a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible. But did not the human nature of the eighteenth-century empiricists play the same role? In fact, what was being analysed then was the properties and forms of representation which made knowledge in general possible. (It was thus that Condillac defined the necessary and sufficient operations for representation to deploy itself as knowledge: reminiscence, self-consciousness, imagination, memory); now that the site of the analysis is no longer representation but man in his finitude, it is a question of revealing the conditions of knowledge on the basis of the empirical contents given in it. (*OT* 318-319)

Foucault says that during the Classical age there was no theory of signification. Such a theory was not necessary. One did not need to order a disordered world, one did not need to signify in order to grant to things an identity. The world was not like a gigantic rubbish heap in which things needed to be picked out by signs before they had any identity and integrity. Man's task was simply to construct a system of signs that could be applied to things by convention. The contrast with Kant is striking, and Foucault believes that it is with Kant that the modern era begins. For Kant there is no orderly world prior to man's intervention. The structure of man's consciousness determines the world for Kant, not so for the Classical era.

The significance of Foucault's explanation of language in the Classical age is his contention that such a theory of language excludes a science of man as a doublet. Or rather it precludes the necessity of a science of man. This supports his contention that man is only a recent invention. Man, the complex object of the human sciences, loses his solidity and becomes only a passing spectre in the history of thought according to Foucault. The Classical episteme linked the human being and nature in discourse. Discourse represented being and the locus of representation was the subject. It is for that reason that the human sciences were precluded. Classical language made representation possible. There was no need for a human being to serve as the transcendental source of signification. Language and the

world cooperated without the intervention of man. Man did not endow signs with meaning. A science of man which determined the structure of his consciousness in the manner of Kant was not necessary in the Classical age. Language was equal to the task, and man was able to use that language. It was merely necessary to show that signs were reliable and that man could use them without confusion. It was not necessary to elaborate a theory of a transcendental ego to ground knowledge. It was not within the depths of man's being that truth found its ground. Man was not the measure of all things, merely the measurer of all things.

III. The Emergence of Man in the Modern Age

The episteme of representation collapsed some time around the end of the eighteenth century. Foucault identifies the collapse of representation with the emergence of man. Suddenly the existence of the world became a problem. With the collapse of representation the world no longer gave itself to man as an ordered totality. The existence of discrete objects was no longer thought so unproblematic. The role of the subject became an issue. The subject acquired a constituitive function in the absence of representation, and therefore an investigation of man became necessary. Kant's self-proclaimed Copernican revolution is the paradigm of this "archaeological mutation" in knowledge. Kant held that rather than the subject conforming to the object, it was the object which conformed to the subject. To warrant this claim Kant had to produce an analytic of the subject, the result is *The Critique of Pure Reason*. With this change in epistemes man became both object and subject of knowledge. He was both the knower and the known. The knowing subject by making himself into an object of inquiry, tries to uncover the ground for knowing himself, through and through, as a knowing subject. To suppress his bias as the investigator, and thereby retain the ideal of explaining himself with scientific precision, man himself becomes this ground as a transcendental subject. Paradoxically he must know that he can become this ground before beginning his investigation, otherwise he would never escape from all that

makes him biased in the first place. Man's impossible task, says Foucault, is to ground his transcendental subjectivity in his empirical subjectivity.

In the nineteenth century man again found himself in a world he knew only through the mediation of language. But it was no longer the transparent language of representation. Language did not provide the subject with direct access to the world in the modern era. In the face of positive knowledge about himself man encounters the finitude of his being. But a peculiar move takes place in the modern era, one that Foucault thinks is characteristic of it, and one which sees the birth of man. The move was to make of man's finitude the conditions of knowledge. It therefore became imperative to investigate man as a constitutive subject.

With Kant and the modern era what Foucault called "the analytic of finitude" began. The goal of the analytic of finitude was to show how representation was now possible, and to determine which representations were permissable and which were not. In Kant this took the form of the transcendental deduction of the categories. The difference between Descartes and Kant is striking here. For Descartes the world appears to the subject as an ordered totality without any synthetic act required. All that was required of the subject for Descartes was clear thinking. For Kant the world does not exist in the same pristine manner. The world is not an orderly totality until the subject has brought his consciousness to bear upon it.

In the modern era the world was not orderly prior to the intervention of the subject. Man's task was no longer to analyse and represent the world; that was no longer efficacious. The analytic is novel to the modern age. It is a rejection of the *mathesis universalis* which had formally insured our access to truth. Prior to the analytic of man, representation insured that there was an order of things, man did not need to exist as a representer.

In the modern era man is both subject and object of knowledge. As subject he organises the world in which he appears as an object. Foucault contends that the modern era began with the notion that man is both sovereign and paradoxically also slave. Man can know, but only because of his factual limitations. Man announces his finitude and therefore also his dual nature in recognising the dispersed functions of representation.

Foucault says that man evolves in the nineteenth century in science and philosophy as a "strange empirico-transcendental doublet". In three sections of *The Order of Things*, namely, "The empirical and the transcendental", "The cogito and the unthought", and "The retreat and return of the origin", Foucault discusses how the finite limitations (the empirical, the unthought, and the retreat of the origin) are perceived as both different from and yet identical with the ground of their possibility, (the transcendental, the cogito, and the return of the origin).

The analytic of finitude cannot succeed says Foucault. Man cannot be reconciled as both sovereign subject and enslaved object. Every attempt at such a reconciliation must insist on both the identity and the difference of man's finitude and the grounds of his certainty. Such a reconciliation is impossible. It leads to the "strange empirico-transcendental doublet" of man. The analytic of finitude promises to deliver to man all that eludes him. The empirical facts governing man's existence become the transcendental conditions of any knowledge whatsoever. The cogito insures that that which is not thought will become thought. As the source of temporality man repossesses the history that precedes him. For these reasons Foucault believes that any philosophy or science characterised by the analytic of finitude is profoundly humanistic.

A. The Empirical and the Transcendental

With the establishment of the empirico-transcendental doublet Foucault says that two kinds of analyses arose, for both of which an analogue can be found in Kant. They arose because of the attempt made to ground the transcendental in the empirical. The first kind of analysis is analogous to Kant's transcendental aesthetic and the second to his transcendental dialectic. The analysis which functioned as a sort of transcendental aesthetic revealed that the conditions for knowledge do not escape consideration of man's anatomo-physiological nature. The analysis that

functioned as a kind of transcendental dialectic revealed that knowledge had social, historical and economic conditions governing its existence.

Both sorts of analysis presuppose the existence of a true discourse. The truth of that discourse depends upon either an account of perception or of history. This is because man is conceived of either as a being of nature or as a being of history. The truth about man's nature or history is necessary for a true discourse about man. The status of this true discourse remains ambiguous though. There are two unsatisfactory explanations. First that the discourse is founded on an empirical truth, in that case one has a positivist type of analysis. Alternately the discourse prophesises the truth about which it is concerned. Foucault calls this an eschatological type of explanation. Comte is an example of the positivist alternative and Marx of the eschatological alternative. Man appears as a reduced truth, as in Comte, or on the way to a promised truth, as in Marx. The tension between these two is obvious and unavoidable, and is present in any discourse which tries to reconcile the empirical with the transcendental and therefore must be both eschatological and positivistic.

To avoid this unworkable dichotomy one must produce a discourse that neither reduces nor promises man. That discourse would have to separate the empirical and the transcendental while still concerning itself with both. Foucault says that Merleau-Ponty attempted to produce such a

discourse. Merleau-Ponty sought the foundation of knowledge in the primary experience of the body. Even Merleau-Ponty admitted the ambiguity of his "analysis of actual experience" however. The analysis of actual experience is simply a more careful attempt at making the empirical stand for the transcendental. It tries to ground knowledge of nature on an original experience of which the body provides an outline, and to provide a history of culture based on that discourse of actual experience. Foucault claims that the problems created by the attempt to assimilate the empirical and the transcendental are insurmountable. They will only disappear with the disappearance of the man who was born in the modern era. The way out of the transcendental/empirical double is to discard humanist discourse founded on an anthropology. Foucault therefore claims that man is dead, hence his anti-humanism. Foucault's problem then becomes to find a replacement for man. He thought that discourse was the solution.

B. The Cogito and the Unthought

The second double is "the cogito and the unthought". This double posits man as surrounded by that which he cannot not make sense of, but who as a sovereign cogito is the source of all intelligibility. The cogito disarms anything that is not thought by showing how it can be thought, but not by making it into thought as in idealism. Foucault claims that man cannot be this sovereign cogito and at the

same time rely on empirical knowledge. The modern cogito tries to link thought to that which is non-thought, without reducing the latter to thought. The cogito cannot but fail in this task. The modern cogito cannot posit the 'I am' because non-thought eludes it. Man cannot gain control of the language that makes thought possible, he cannot coincide with his own labor, nor even with his own body. The modern cogito, unlike that in Descartes, cannot deliver to man all that eludes him by refusing to be thought.'

'Hayden White does not seem to have grasped Foucault's insistence on the need to look outside the cogito for an adequate explanation of knowledge. He points in the right direction but draws the wrong conclusions. Despite all that Foucault has said about the death of man, the role of history and his theory of discourse which decenters man, White still believes that he is interested in "deep structures of consciousness".

> Foucault shares with Levi-Strauss and Lacan an interest in the deep structures of human consciousness, a conviction that study of such deep structures must begin with an analysis of language, and a conception of language which has its origins in the work of the recognised father of Structural linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure. All three thinkers proceed on the assumption that the distinction between language on the one side and human thought on the other must be dissolved if human phenomena are to be understood as what they truly are, that is to say, elements of a communication system. (Hayden White, Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground, *History and Theory*, (12), 1973, p. 23.)

White is correct that Foucault, Lacan, Levi-Strauss and Saussure share a common interest, but he is wrong about most everything else. Foucault is not interested in deep structures of consciousness. He is interested in showing how subjectivity is constituted without reference to consciousness. Foucault does not believe that there are deep structures. Furthermore he would be caught in an embarrassing contradiction if he believed that there were these deep structures and that at the same time they were, as human phenomena, elements of a communication system. Deep structures of consciousness, whatever they are, cannot be elements of a communication system.

C. The Retreat and Return of the Origin

The third and final double is "The retreat and return of the origin". In the modern era it is characteristic of man's mode of being that he appears both as the source of history and time, but also as the product of a history whose origin always eludes him. Man could never possess his origin because the background of life always begins long before him. Man cannot apprehend the origin of his own historicity because he cannot occupy the position of some primordial observer of history. Man's origin, says Foucault, is not a dawn, but rather the manner in which he articulates himself against the already begun. The attempt to gain hold of man's origin in the face of its constant retreat required that man be posited as the source of temporality. It was Kant who made time a form of the pure understanding. Perhaps with Dasein in mind Foucault says,

> So that it is in him that things (those same things that hang over him) find their beginning: rather than a cut, made at some given moment in duration, he is the opening from which time in general can be reconstituted, duration can flow, and things, at the appropriate moment, can make their appearance. (*OT* 332)

The unworkable conflation of the retreat and the return of the origin therefore becomes clear. As in the other doubles the *modus operandi* is to equate man's factual limitations with that which makes knowledge of them possible, while at

the same time differentiating them. Time is the factual limitation barring man from his origin. Man is born into an already existing culture and language. The attempt is made, in the face of this, to return man's origin to him by making him the source of temporality. Things therefore begin with man, without man there would be no world, as Heidegger said. In the modern age man becomes the transcendental source of his own temporal limitations.

IV. The Human Sciences

This man and his doubles of whom Foucault speaks, has according to him infiltrated the human sciences. Or rather, since this suggests that the human sciences were already there, one could say that it is this conception of man as a double that forms the substrate, or *arche*, on top of which the human sciences were formed. The subject of the human sciences is man, but it is man as an empirico-transcendental doublet which they unknowingly declare as their object in fact. Foucault's exposition on man and his doubles forms the basis of his criticism of the human sciences. He trys to show that since they presuppose a view of man that involves an unworkable dichotomy, that the whole superstructure of the human sciences is in peril.

Foucault says that the mode of being attributed to man in modern times makes possible the human sciences. This claim shoud not be taken lightly; it is provocative and audacious. The claim is that the human sciences did not evolve as a discipline. It was not the case that an increasingly scientific reflection on man gradually gave rise to the human sciences. It was not the advance of rationality which one day decided to take man as its object, that gave us the human sciences. The 'man' of the human sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is not the same 'man' who figured in seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy. One does not find the infant form of the human sciences in the seventeenth century. At that time

there was no investigation of man as an object, both empirical and transcendental, about whom it was possible to utter truths. In modern times philosophy has given to the human sciences a conception of man which they have claimed for their own and sought to explicate with their own methods and concepts. Foucault rejects then not only the humanism of the human sciences, but also the humanistic account of their origin.

The provocative claim is that the form and content of the human sciences follow from the empirico-transcendental nature of the man whom they take as their object. That the human sciences in fact take this doublet for their object is exhibited by their project, says Foucault. That project is that man can subject his very being to total clarification. Because man is a living, speaking and labouring being, (and so determined by biology, economy and language) he can through the human sciences gain complete access to his being and so define it for himself. In the human sciences man becomes the transcendental source of his being, in virtue of, and despite, his empirical nature.

The humanism of the human sciences is precisely this project of the total clarification of man's being. Like the doublets that inspired them, the human sciences too require a questionable dialectical movement. From an analysis of what man is by nature (a living, speaking, labouring being) the human sciences endeavour to show how man can know what life is, what the essence of labour is, and how he is able

to speak his language. The human sciences thus require that man be the sort of being who owes his limitations only to himself.

The traditional claim of humanism, namely, that it is concerned with liberation (usually of one's mind) begins to pale therefore. The kind of liberation that the human sciences promise us is offered at a terrible cost. Man is made responsible for his own being. There is a certain appeal to this stoical notion, but it is, I think, ill founded and has unfortunate consequences. In fact, what is offered is only a pseudo-liberation. No sooner does man learn of his freedom and responsibility, than he is shackled with the imperative of discarding his entire personal history and becoming his 'true' self. Man's burden becomes heavier (and this time before the sin).

There is much wrong with this proffered liberation. It is entirely ahistorical. The political importance of any theory of man which impels us to ignore history is obvious. For we must look to history, and not to the truth about man's being, if we are to understand why the Soviets have Gulags, or why Canadian native people have been treated the way they have been, for example. Otherwise the specific questions these instances raise become fused and lost in general and facile solutions like, 'it's human nature'. What lies at the heart of humanism is a faulty account of the human ego, and by implication, of human agency. The ego that the humanists require is born fully formed and completely

given to itself. Thus an unfortunate individualism is sanctioned. What Foucault and others suggest (notably Lacan) is that man's ego is rather formed by the 'other'. Furthermore the ego is given as fractured, and incapable of being completely possessed by its owner. But what the anti-humanist loses in stoicism and individualistic bravado, he makes up for with an appreciation for man's communal nature and for the fragility and contingency of his being. Foucault's anti-humanism makes us more humane.

There is therefore, I believe, a certain insidiousness to the human sciences thus portrayed. The belief that with sufficient scrutiny, man's being can be completely revealed and that one can utter truths about it (we are afterall talking about a human *science*) makes it all too easy to dismiss as inhuman or abnormal any form of deviance. A pernicious intellectualism lies at the heart of this humanism. One can know through and through the truth of one's being. Intellectual courage is sufficient to rid oneself of any abnormality. As with Sartre's notion of bad faith, there is a distinct lack of sympathy to this view. We must must rather, along with Foucault, ask ourselves whether we truly need a true being. We must beware of any discipline that promises us the truth about man. Foucault reminds us that it is always a good idea to look about to see who such a truth excludes. At times it has been the poor, the unemployed, sometimes it is homosexuals, sometimes intellectuals. It is no wonder then that Foucault grants to

psychoanalysis and ethnology, "a privileged position in our knowledge." (*OT* 373) Both disciplines subvert the project of total clarification of man's being.

Psychoanalysis and ethnology defeat the attempts by the human sciences to present man's true nature. They point to that which though constituitive of man, always eludes his consciousness; the unconscious in the case of psychoanalysis and history in the case of ethnology. These two disciplines do not share the same project of the human sciences. They do not propose a general theory of man. They point instead to the impossibility of such a theory by showing that man is not the sort of object around which a science can be formulated. Psychoanalysis and ethnology dissolve man by explaining human beings without refering to the content of their consciousness. The notion of a science of man founders on the absence of a conspicuous object. The dissolution of man sounds the death knell of the human sciences. What Foucault's notion of discourse tries to show is that man must be understood as a product of something which lies outside of him, and that he is not a lucid cogito who creates himself.

Foucault argues that it is a misnomer to speak of human sciences. There cannot be a human science because the object which such a science demands does not exist. Science, for Foucault is not merely knowledge. He distinguishes "positive science" from knowledge. Positive science is based on "a deductive and linear linking together of evident or verified

propositions". They "proceed by relating discontinuous but analogous elements in such a way that they are then able to to establish causal relations and structural constants between them." (*OT* 347) Science for Foucault means positive science. There can be no science of man. There can however be knowledge of man. Man is a product of the way in which he is obliged to be conceived within the modern episteme. He is a being surrounded by language, life and labour, and who is able to know all about his being and to acquire mastery over it. Such a transcendentally motivated being cannot be an object for the hard sciences. Despite their pretensions then the human sciences are sterile.

Foucault's position is that the birth of man was announced when language in the Classical age showed itself as no longer capable of sustaining a *mathesis universalis*. Man therefore moved into the place previously occupied by language in the Classical age. Man's new found responsibility necessitated an analysis of his being. Kant became the first philosophical anthropologist therefore. Man was heralded as that being whose very limitations, his finitude, made possible knowledge that transcended those limitations. The same motif operates in the human sciences; man's empirical nature allows him to know and master that nature.[7]

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[7]Hayden Whites explanation of Foucault's criticism is incorrect. He say's, "A science of the 'human' is not possible, Foucault argues, not because man is qualitatively different from everything else in the cosmos, but because he is precisely the *same* as everything else. This belief that man is qualitatively different is sustained, however, by the

Foucault believes that the analytic of man, that is, tha analytic of finitude, was made possible by the disappearance of one episteme and the appearance of another.

> If ...language is now emerging with greater and greater insistence in a unity that we ought to think but cannot as yet do so, is this not the sign that the whole of this configuration is now about to topple, and that man is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine ever brighter upon the horizon? Since man was constituted at a time when language was doomed to dispersion, will he not be dispersed when language regains its unity? And if that were true, would it not be an error - a profound error, since it could hide us from what now should be thought - to interpret our

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'(cont'd) ascription of a privileged place in the "order of things" to the thing called "language". (Hayden White, "Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground", *History and Theory*, (12), 1973, p. 32.). Yet Foucault explicitly says that there can be no science which takes man as its object precisely because man is a very peculiar and different kind of object than that which belong to the hard sciences - man is an empirico-transcendental doublet. The implication of this is certainly not that Foucault believes that man is really the same as every other object. If man were an object like every other object then indeed a positive science of him, *pace* White, would be possible. White's statement amounts to the same thing as saying that a science of physics is impossible because atoms are just like every other object.

White says further that it is Foucault's position that the qualitative difference between man and other objects relies on the special status attributed to language. Foucault believes just the opposite. It is precisely the lack of any special status for language which has made the human sciences possible. Foucault explicitly says (on p. 386 of *The Order of Things*) that it is with the emergence of language in the privileged role of discourse that the demise of the human science is heralded.

> actual experience as an application of the forms of language to the human order? Ought we not rather to give up thinking of man, or, to be more strict, to think of this disappearance of man - and the ground of possibility of all sciences of man - as closely as possible in correlation with our concern with language? Ought we not to admit that, since language is here once more, man will return to that serene non-existence in which he was formerly maintained by the imperious unity of discourse? (*OT* 386)

Man, to whom the humanists pay homage as the measure of all things, is made redundant by language. It is not a primary and original ego which constitutes the world, but discourse. Man is part of the world created by discourse. Man is decentered in that he is no longer the centre of the intellectual universe. An autonomous and productively efficacious language robs the ego of its claim to primacy. The transcendental ego of Husserl cannot, by claiming to be no empirical ego, escape the effects of this conception of language. Such a conception of language excludes the possibility of pure self-reference on which the transcendental ego relies for its existence.

A transcendental ego is a pure subjectivity unaffected by empirical conditions. The empirical ego is an object for the transcendental ego. The transcendental ego apprehends himself only as a subject. Such an apprehension, says Foucault, is impossible. Subjectivity begins in discourse

and so is always in relation to the other. A transcendental ego cannot exist alongside of discourse because discourse denies that there is any cogency to the notion of language that such an ego relies on. It requires a language, dealing with the self, which when uttered, absolutely excludes any reference except to the speaking subject. Foucault's belief is that discourse is always necessarily caught in such an external network of relations.

V. From Man to Discourse

Foucault ended *The Order of Things* prophesising the death of man. Since man appeared when language was in retreat, does not the return of language herald the demise of man, he asks. Man is done away with as the ground of knowledge. It is therefore incumbent on Foucault to provide a new ground. Foucault believes that it is "discourse" that takes man's place. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is about the way discourse produces and organises knowledge.

Foucault continues in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* his attack on continuist history which he rejected in *The Order of Things*. Foucault argued that history is not a continum. There are discontinuous breaks in history, breaks beyond which one can no longer discover the latent forms of present ideas or practices. One cannot trace a continued, uninterrupted genesis of every object,idea or discipline. Continuist history presupposes a humanism whereby the dispersion of events are gathered and given a unity and coherence. Continuist history returns to man all that which threatens to elude him. Continuist history relies on an active, creative subject. It is the subject which forges a continuity from the dispersion of events. Discontinuous history refuses to grant to man the right to serve as the origin of a genesis, continuity and totalization of history.

Foucault directs his attack against all those seemingly innoceht notions which buttress the belief that history is continuous. Notions like, 'tradition', 'influence',

'oeuvre', 'book', etc., reduce dispersed events to a single origin. The notion of 'genius' is summarily invoked to explain anything that does not fit in the continuity of things.

Foucault refuses to be a historian of ideas. That task is always bound up with humanism and continuity in history. History, in that case, becomes geneology. Instead one must become an archaeologist of ideas. History of ideas is superficial. In 1966 Foucault separated himself from that tradition of scholarship.

> One could say that the break with the past generation began the day that Levi-Strauss with regard to societies and Lacan with regards to the unconscious showed us that "meaning" was probably nothing but a sort of surface effect, a scum, and that that which affected us most profoundly, that which preceded us, that which maintains us, in space and time was the system.

[1] An archaeology of knowledge seeks the system which presupposes any body of knowledge. The history of ideas takes the form of commentary and interpretation. The attempt is made to get behind what the author actually said to find out his 'real' meaning. One tries to say what the author said but obscured in tha act of saying it. Continuity is proven by showing that two authors actually say much the

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[1]Quoted by Donald McDonell, "On Foucault's Philosophical Method", *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, vol. VII, no. 3, Sept. 1977, p. 537.

same thing. One tries to show that so and so really meant to say such and such without actually having said it. This type of analysis involves a humanism that returns to the author that which appears to elude him. Despite appearances it is shown that the author really is in control of his discourse. Foucault tries to show that discourse cannot be reduced to the intentions of a subject. The reality of discourse escapes the imperialism of the subject. Discourse always refers to something outside the subject for its origin and genesis. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault tries to show that knowledge is produced by a discourse that produces itself.

VI. The Organisation of Discourse

The Archaeology of Knowledge is about "statements" and "discursive formations". The term "discourse" is essentially synonomous with the term "discursive formation". "Discursive formation" is used when Foucault wants to draw attention to the rule governed nature of discourse. Discursive formations are comprised of statements, so an investigation of one entails knowledge of the other. The term "statement" seems familiar and we presume to have little difficulty with its meaning. "Discursive formation", however, is an unrecognizable construction. Foucault begins *The Archaeology of Knowledge* explaning what he means by this new term and later turns to a discussion of statements.

The analysis of discursive formations will in fact shake our faith that there is something recognizable in statements. The analysis of discursive formations will at least indicate what statements are not. At first glance then it is clear that for Foucault, discursive formations are in some sense related to things like science. He uses a new vocabulary though for these 'dispersions' so that he can stress the absence of the role of a creative subject in their formation. One can note already that the notion of the statement has been rarefied. A statement belongs to a discursive formation, which is something like a science. So statements are not common. They are not throw-away phrases like "the cat is on the mat", or "shut the door". Statements are not just any group of signs conforming to the grammar of

a particular language.

Foucault has difficulty making this point though. Traditionally "the cat is on the mat", would not be construed as a statement belonging to a science because the person who uttered it did not intend that it should be. What Foucault must show, since he does not think it fruitful to examine speaker's intentions or the manifest meaning of the utterance, is that such an utterance would not be produced by the rules of formation. I argue later that he cannot do this; he tries to get around this problem using, I believe, an unworkable distinction between sentences and statements. I will return to this point.

'One can understand why then that some have refered to Foucault's statements as "serious speech acts".' Speech acts require a context for their meaning to be specified. Further that context can be a serious one; in that case it would determine whether a speech act belongs to an existing serious discourse, (for example, a science or religion). The speech act would itself be serious in the sense of crucial; its presence has a significant impact on the discourse. Extending this model to Foucault the implication is that statements are statements in virtue of belonging to a discourse, and that a discourse is comprised of statements which can modify it. But not just any statement can fit within a discourse. The discourse, because of what it

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'Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1982, p. 48.)

already contains, cannot accept just anything.

Calling statements "serious speech acts" is a useful way of indicating the peculiar way in which Foucault uses the terms 'discourse' and 'statement'. I will show though later why one should not push this analogy too far. I think it glosses over a serious flaw in Foucault's argument; namely, he presents a topology of discourse that even on its own terms does not work. Foucault's primary interest is in showing how statements are produced, not how they are understood. He is not concerned with showing that one must know the context within which a linguistic configuration is composed to understand it as a statement. He wants to show that the context produces the statement, though not in the sense that the speaker must know his audience in order to formulate the appropriate speech act. He wants to show that discourse and not individuals produce statements. Foucault does this by showing that discourse is a rule governed body of statements to which a subject must conform if he wants to use that discourse.

The question is how are we to account for the unity and existence of these discursive formations. Foucault enunciates four traditional explanations and claims that each is inadequate. The first hypothesis is that statements form a discursive formation if they all refer to the same object. The second hypothesis is that statements form a discursive formation by having in common a certain style. Nineteenth century medicine, for example, could be

characterised as a group of descriptive statements. The third hypothesis was that statements belonging to a discursive formation existed whenever there was a common persistent theme among a group of statements. None of these four hypotheses were satisfactory. In each case they were rejected because they presuppose something anterior to the discourse in question to which a subject referred. Foucault says that the analysis of discourse will reveal that there is nothing anterior to it.'°

Each of the four traditional hypotheses required the active intervention of a subject who expressed, or lent speech to, something which was non-discursive. Foucault wants to show that it is discourse itself which is productive of statements. He therefore does away with the need for an active referring subject. Foucault also wants to avoid what could be called a Marxist position, he does not believe that discourse is produced by institutions or the material conditions of life. We shall see that to exclude both the subject and the material conditions of life from the creation of statements Foucault presents an unwieldy topology of discourse.

In four successive hypotheses Foucault insists that objects, concepts, themes and types of enunciations emerge with discourse. They do not exist in some non-discursive

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'°Foucault appears to have a problem therefore. Discourse is both the object of investigation and the condition of the possibility of such an investigation. He is caught then, it seems, in the same empirico-transcendental paradox which he accuses the human sciences of. I shall work out later this inconsistency in his account of discourse.

silence waiting to be articulated in language. The time of their birth is the moment they are articulated in discursive practice, that is, in rule governed discourse. Language does not re-present that which is prior to language. This is not an idealism however as we shall see.

A. First Hypothesis

Discursive formations are not organised around a common object, but rather objects are produced by discursive formations. For an object to be produced by a discursive formation it is required that there exist in discourse a mechanism of production. That mechanism is the "rules of formation". Foucault says, "The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call *rules of formation*. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division." (*AK* 38) One begins to see how considerably different the discursive formation is from the traditional unities.

Using the discourse of psycopathology as an example, Foucault says that one cannot trace the objects of that discourse beyond the nineteenth century. Prior to the nineteenth century there did not exist the "registers" which prescribed the naming and analysis of objects of psychopathology. Prior to the nineteenth century, Foucault

says that the registers of "minor behavioural disorders, sexual aberrations and disturbances, the phenomena of suggestion and hypnosis, the lessions of the central nervous system, deficiencies of intellectual or motor adaptation, criminality", did not exist. (*AK* 40) On the basis of those registers objects appeared. It is not the case that once there is a register that objects will suddenly begin appearing. The registers themselves must be accounted for. Foucault believes that it is possible to discover the rules which allow objects to appear, combine and juxtapose, and thereby form a particular discourse.

Foucault asks what rules account for the existence of objects in discourse. He refers exclusively to "objects of discourse". Objects of discourse are rare. For example, yeast is a considerably different object for a baker and a microbiologist. As an object for microbiological discourse yeast is classified, studied, analysed under a microscope, it is an object related to a regime of true and false statements. It is in relation to a network of institutions, texts, research projects - the world of microbiology. Foucault is not an idealist, he does not believe that objects are the effects of language. It is just that objects do not exist as the very specific objects that they are in a body of knowledge apart from what is said about them. Evidently Brunshvicg was fond of saying that the history of Egypt was in fact the history of Egyptology. We are not to conclude therefore that the Egyptians owe their existence to

Egyptologists though. Foucault is in a similar position. He is not saying, for example, that electrons depend for their existence on physicists. His position is though that without physicists and all they say about atomic particles the 'electron', *as we know it*, would not exist.

To uncover the rules according to which the appearance of objects are subject, Foucault says that one has to: map the "*surfaces* of their *emergence*"; "describe the authorities of delimitation"; and "analyse the *grids of specification.*" (*AK* 41-42) The surfaces of emergence are the locations where objects are present. In nineteenth century psychopathology, Foucault says that it is the family, the social grouping and the church which are the surfaces of emergence. Each of these surfaces has norms beyond which psychopathology was invoked to explain transgression. The objects of psychopathology were therefore determined by the norms of these surfaces. In our time new surfaces of emergence exist. The arts have established their own norms of what can be considered deviant. Sexuality, scrutinised by psychiatry and medicine has redefined the deviant and prohibitted. The study of criminality has forced a reappraisal of madness. These new surfaces of emergence allow a new range of objects to appear.

The authorities of delimitation are those people who designate something as an object for discourse. In the nineteenth century the medical profession was the major authority that designated madness in its particularity as an

object. The legal and religious authorities were also involved however. The law, with its notions of 'excuse' and 'extenuating circumstances' for example, the religious authorities as the arbiters of mystical and non-mystical experience, and nineteenth century criticism which saw in art a language in need of interpretation, all contributed to the formation of the particular object that was madness.

The grids of specification are the systems according to which the "kinds of madness" are analysed and related. Foucault says that in the nineteenth century these grids were the soul conceived of as a hierarchy of faculties, the body as a system, and the life and history of the individual in which one could identify phases, cycles and potential regressions, and finally the correlations discovered in neuropsychology which acted as a circular system of causality.

The grids of specification, the authorities of delimitation and the surfaces of emergence, are however not sufficient for providing discourse with their objects. Foucault says that one should not conceive of discourse as an altar before which objects are laid as offerings. The surfaces of emergence, authorities of delimitation and the grids of specification do not operate outside of discourse, and having completed their task present their objects to a discourse that lends them speech. There are relations between the surfaces, grids and authorities, and these relations exist in discourse.

Sticking with his example of psychopathology Foucault says that discourse is not characterised by any particular privileged objects. The discourse is the product of the relations between the surfaces of emergence, grids of specification and authorities of delimitation. The effect of these relations which paradoxically operate inside of discourse and yet at the same time produce it is to de-center the subject. They suggest a mechanism operating in the production of knowledge which does not belong to consciousness. For example, Foucault says that the inclusion of delinquency within psychopathology was not the result of some investigator suddenly discovering the similarities between certain types of criminal and pathological behaviour. The juxtaposition of criminality with pathology does not yield the object of delinquency. That object and the discourse on it are far too complex to have been formed in that way. That mode of explanation would be to explain the formation of all discourse as a type of serendipity. Foucault's questionable alternative is that the formation of the discourse on delinquency must be explained by the relations engendered in discourse itself.

Discourse and its formation is therefore de-subjectified. That is, one cannot conceive of discourse as the product of certain subjects who are particularly insightful or eloquent and have a knack for discovering new objects to talk about. We have an intuition of what Foucault means when we use such phrases as "that is typical of the

nineteenth century", or "he is a product of his time", or even "that's typical of a French philosopher". Foucault says, "one cannot speak of anything at any time; it is not easy to say something new; it is not enough for us to open our eyes, to pay attention, or to be aware, for new objects suddenly to light up and emerge out of the ground." (*AK* 44-45) Discourse requires objects, but objects are not constituted independently of discourse.

Discourse is de-subjectified, and it is in some sense also de-objectified. That is, discourse is no longer defined by pre-discursive objects. The result of this is that one does not really understand discourse by charting the history of the referent. It is not a question of trying to determine who was really mad at a particular time and who was not, for example. It is not a question of trying to get behind discourse, to discover the object which discourse only presents in some mangled form.

Foucault therefore rejects explanations of discourse that refer to an object or subject. Furthermore he rejects what would be an alternative to these two, namely, a metaphysical or transcendental explanation. He refuses to define the objects of discourse by seeking the transcendental conditions of their existence. Atemporal transcendental rules cannot explain the historicity of the object. They cannot explain the specificity of the object - they do not explain why this object rather than that object appeared when it did.

Foucault's explanation of discourse does in some sense resemble Kant's analytic. That is why he is careful to call the rules of formation an "historical a priori". Foucault is concerned with conditions of existence and not with conditions of possibility. His analytic does not propel him beyond discourse into the transcendental realm.

The alternative to this rejection of the attempt to discover the transcendental ground of objects is not linguistic analysis. The quest is not to discover the meaning of delinquency or sexual aberancy in the nineteenth century,for example. Rather the challenge is to understand how criminality could become an object for medicine or sexuality an object for psychiatry. Meaning is always post-facto. An allusion to Ferdinand de Saussure is informative at this point. Saussure's account of meaning as the juxtaposition of signs in a system, has the consequence that meaning always proceeds from the system. Meaning is a trace, it is never primary. In Foucault's view too, to engage in a search for meaning is to remain stranded at the superficial level of the trace. It is the system, that is, discourse, that must be illuminated.

B. Second Hypothesis

Foucault's second hypothesis about the unity of discourse was that they comprised groups of statements with a common style. That hypothesis was rejected however. The unity of nineteenth century medicine was not due to the

adoption of a descriptive style, for example. Particular styles of statements, what Foucault calls "enunciative modalities", like objects do not precede discourse, they are formed by it. To analyse the formation of enunciative modalities Foucault says that one must investigate; "who is speaking"; "the institutional *sites*" from which the subject practices his discourse; and finally, the role the subject presumes in his discourse. This investigation will allow one to discover the rules operating behind the diversity of statements. Foucault believes that such an investigation will reveal all sorts of relations which will determine what can count as knowledge. It will reveal that the production of knowledge involves something other than a lucid cogito, and is motivated by something other that a quest for objectivity.

The position that enunciative modalities are created by discourse has the implication that the subject is de-centered. There is no room in Foucault's scheme for a founding consciousness. Nor does Foucault's account concern itself with what the subject thought he was doing. Foucault said in the preface to *The Order of Things* (which ante-dates the *The Archaeology of Knowledge*) that he sought the "positive unconscious" of knowledge. An unconscious that produces rather than represses knowledge. Foucault's anti-humanism is clear. The primacy of the ego is disputed. Enunciative modalities are determined by factors outside of any individuals consciousness.

Foucault maintains that his analysis of enunciative modalities points away from the unity and unifying function of the subject. It indicates the dispersion of the subject. The status of speakers, the sites from which they speak and the positions they can ocuppy, are not established by an act of consciousness, but rather by discourse. The alternative as Foucault sees it is to posit a consciousness which creates this system of formation anterior to discourse. Only in that way is the influence of discourse avoided. Discourse is then a translation into speech of a previously established system. Decentering the subject has the effect therefore that discourse cannot be regarded as the sign of something else. Discourse is in fact an anonymous totality in which subjects are dispersed.

C. Third Hypothesis

Foucault says that the rules of the formation of objects cannot be found in the object. An analysis of the meaning of words in discourse cannot reveal the origin and effect of objects. Such an analysis always refers to the intentions of a subject, but in fact one must look outside of the subject. Likewise the formation of enunciative modalities cannot be related to a subject. The formation of concepts cannot be accounted for by a horizon of ideality or a progress of ideas, or by the subject. Instead one must seek an organisation of statements in which disparate concepts appeared.

That organisation involves various "orderings of enunciative series". Foucault says that there exist in discourse a set of rules for arranging statements in series. In that series of statements concepts derive their value. Foucault says that the difference between natural history during the sixteenth century and that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, was not the result of a new body of knowledge which redefined already existing concepts. In natural history in the seventeenth century there was a new way of arranging statements; the intention was to recreate the perceptual process. That project demanded a particular ordering of descriptive statements, classificatory statements, statements of observation, deductions, presumptions, etc. That ordering, rather than a conscious redefinition formed concepts.

Foucault says that by examining the forms of "coexistence" and "procedures of intervention" among statements, one will uncover the way concepts are formed. It will reveal how concepts are appropriated by one discourse from another, instead of being the product of particularly creative individuals. The field of presence is all those statements formulated in one discourse and taken up by another. These statements may be adopted as true, or they may be criticised, modified or rejected. Particular sorts of relations are therefore formed by statements in a field of presence. For example the field of presence in the Classical age is quite different than that in the period in which

Aldrovandi merely chronicled in a single text every fantastic and non-fantastic report which preceded him. The field of concomitance concerns those statements from a quite different discourse which are still nevertheless active in another discourse. Statements from the other discourse may serve as models or analogies for example. Foucault says that the field of concomitance in natural history at the time of Linaeus and Buffon was defined by relations, "with cosmology, the history of the earth, philosophy, theology, scripture and biblical exegesis, mathematics (in the very general form of a science of order)..." (*AK* 58) The field of memory involves those statements no longer accepted or discussed by a discourse. It is on the basis of the field of memory that the history of a discourse may be traced. What these relations indicate is that at any time there are relations between various texts, disciplines, sciences, etc., which, though unknown to any investigator, determine what he does.

Foucault is well aware of the disparate nature of these orderings of enunciative series, forms of coexistance and procedures of intervention.

> Some constitute rules of formal consrtuction of a text, others rhetorical practices, some define the internal configuration of a text, others the modes of relation and interference between different texts; some are characteristics of a particular period, others have a distant origin and far

reaching chronological import." (*AK* 59)

It is the relations among the elements of the three however, that belong to a discursive formation, and constitute the system of formation of concepts. Foucault is quite structuralist in his description of the way concepts are formed. Concepts are the recurrent elements in statements, they are formed by their relations with one another. This is similar to Saussure's account of the production of meaning by the system of signs that is language. It is not then a matter of tracing the meaning and origin of the manifest concepts. One performs a typical step back from meaning to the system.

Concepts are formed by the relations in discourse which place particular statements in proximity with one another. It is not the individual who refines a concept and thereby creates new ones. Nor is it against a horizon of transcendentally ideal structures of concepts that concepts gain their particularity.

D. Fourth Hypothesis

In the chapter on "The Formation of Strategies", Foucault says that in discourse the organisation of concepts, the groups of objects, and the types of enunciations of statements, form themes or theories. These themes or theories Foucault calls "strategies". The problem is to determine why this strategy rather than another one exists at a particular time. Foucault rejects the position

that there is a transcendental necessity to the appearance of strategies. But he also rejects the position that their appearance is entirely a matter of chance. Afterall, not everything that could be said is in fact ever said. Foucault tries, rightly I think, to explain why a particular discourse occurs when it does. Having given up the belief that a lucid cogito lies at the origin of knowledge, Foucault is free to accept history. What someone like Descartes could not explain, without saying something strained like: life is short, or, people are lazy, is why history has not come to an end, why is not everything already known. Foucault's rules of formation are, I believe, an attempt to more adequately explain the historicity of discourse. Getting rid of the cogito altogether though does present Foucault with problems he cannot solve with his theory of discourse. Foucault believes that one can discover a regularity in the appearance of strategies, and that one can define a system of their formation. A discursive formation exists whenever one can describe a system of formation of strategies.

Such a description requires that one determine the "points of diffraction" of discourse, the economy of discursive constellations, and the function that a discourse has "in a field of non-discursive practices". The points of diffraction derive from one another and regulate each other. They are imcompatible alternatives within a discourse. The points of diffraction contribute to a system of formation

because each alternative implies a group of objects, concepts and type of statement. The discursive constellation is the relation that one discourse may have with another. They check the possible options opened by the points of diffraction. Foucault contends, for example, that the theory of value in economics in the eighteenth century was linked to the theory of language then present. Stategies are also determined by the function that discourse is forced to perform, for example, the role of the "analysis of wealth" in the emergence of capitalism.

The analysis of formation of objects, enunciative modalities, concepts and stategies, indicates that discourse is the product of a system. The four groups of rules, the four systems, which become evident with the study of objects, concepts, stategies and enunciative modalities together form a single system. This accounts for the repetitiousness of Foucault's account of the four systems of formation. Among the four systems there exists a vertical system of dependence. Each system limits and defines the other, they are not independent of one another. Together they account for the rarity and historicity of discourse.

Foucault's description of his four systems is nevertheless fairly abstract, and for the uninitiated his examples are none too helpful. It is helpful though to keep in mind the overall model of his account of discourse. That model is taken, obviously enough, from archaeology. It is the model of surface and depth; of discovering beneath the

present city the ruins on top of which it was founded. The city in this case is discourse, and the ruins on top of which it stands are the four systems of formation. Foucault cannot push the archaeology metaphor too far though, otherwise one would expect to find not the rules of formation below discourse, but another discourse just as one finds the ruins of one city beneath the one presently standing. In fact we will see that this is precisely Foucault's problem. He cannot argue that it is the rules of formation which create discourse, because he has no means of discovering them. I will argue this by showing that Foucault cannot collapse truth into discourse, as he does, and still be an archaeologist.

There is a second model at work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. That is the topological model. Foucault refers constantly to the "interior" and "exterior" of discourse. His abstract model posits constraints that act within discourse itself. The four systems of formation are methodological signposts for discovering the types of relations that must be established within a discourse for particular theories, hypotheses or statements to be enunciated. It is on this model too that Foucault's theory of discourse founders, as we shall see. One could perhaps imagine the formation of a discourse as like constructing a house. Particular building supplies are necessary for the construction of a particular house. Furthermore with those supplies one could not construct, for example, an

automobile. What is used to construct the house constrains what kind of house can be built. To push this model a bit one could even say that the construction materials will ultimately determine what can be brought into the house, either as a matter of entrance size or because certain things simply would not belong there, (I am thinking of interior design). Foucault's account of discourse is similar. He shows what relationships must be present at hand for a discourse to be formed. He also insists that a discourse is limited in what it can incorporate by its rules of formation. He tries to show that it is the relationships between the elements of a discourse which accounts for what gets said, and not the creative intentions of the speaker or the material conditions of life.''

''Hilary Putnam, despite his petentious manner, does not understand Foucault's notion of discourse.

> Coming back to Foucault, however, and ignoring the signs in Foucault's most recent work that he too is becoming radicalized, his motive for focussing on the cases he chooses is *precisely* to suggest the utterly non-rational (and, in fact, irrational) character of the real *reasons* that people have for adopting ideological positions. And the notion of the ideological here is very wide; it is not just Communism, Fascism, Democracy, the Divine Right of Kings, etc., that are under discussion. The belief that someone is a 'criminal' and the belief that someone is 'diseased' and needs a 'cure', the belief that someone is a 'criminal' and should, if possible, be 'rehabilitated' and many, many more of our everyday beliefs are 'ideological' in the sense of these thinkers. Indeed to the eagle eye of the Marxist sociologist or the French philosopher, almost *every* belief is 'ideological'. Perhaps, 'if I drop this glass, it will break' is ideologically neutral, but little else is. (Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and and History*. New York, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981, p. 146.)

Fortunately for us the misguided efforts of these poor French philosophers have not escaped the eagle eye of Hilary

E. Explicating the Statement

Foucault admits that in his explanation of the formation of objects, stategies, concepts and enunciative modalities that he used some key terms in an imprecise way. In Part III of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* he sets out to rectify the situation. He particularly attempts to define what he means by 'statement', but other terms are made more precise as well. It is evident from all that Foucault has said about the formation of concepts, objects, strategies

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''(cont'd) Putnam. But whether Putnam has actually cast his keen gaze on what Foucault has written on the subject is in doubt. In the section titled "Knowledge and Ideology" in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (pp. 184-186) Foucault says just what the limits of ideology are. Ideology has a political import for both Foucault and Marxist scholars, they certainly do not use the term in the wide sense that Putnam describes. Putnams construal of discourse as ideology reveals nothing of what Foucault actually says.

Ironically Putnam hints at the shortcomings of his evaluation.

> It may seem that I have missed the real point of what Foucault is saying. His real point, he himself would say, is not that the ideological perspectives of the past were foolish or irrational at all, but rather that all ideology in the very wide sense in which he uses the term, including our present ideology, is culture relative. He is trying to show us how every culture lives, thinks, sees, makes love, by a set of unconscious guiding assumptions with non-rational determinants. If previous ideologies now seem 'irrational' it is because we judge them by our culture-bound notion of rationality. (Ibid., p.160)

Putnam has transformed discourse into ideology. One does not find any of the vocabulary that Putnam uses to describe Foucault in his works. Foucault never speaks of cultural relativism, he does not describe the past as irrational and epistemes or discourse are not "unconscious guiding assumptions". While Foucault may have obscured his own text with neologisms and strange locutions, it was precisely to escape from the hackneyed vocabulary of 'culture relative', 'forms of life', etc., that he did so. In his haste to make of Foucault a dogmatic Marxist, Putnam has hoisted upon him a mantle which he goes to great lengths to reject in both *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

and enunciative modalities, that he is using the term 'statement' in a peculiar way.

> If we agree to call *verbal performance*, or better, *linguistic performance*, any group of signs produced on the basis of a natural (or artificial) language (*langue*), we could call *formulation* the individual (or possibly collective) act that reveals, on any material and according to a particular form, that group of signs: the formulation is an event that can always be located by its spatio-temporal coordinates, which can always be related to an author, and which may constitute in itself a particular act (a 'performative' act, as the British analysts call it); we can call *sentence* or *proposition* the units that grammar or logic may recognize in a group of signs: these units may always be characterised by the elements that figure in them, and by the rules of construction that unite them; in relation to the sentence and the proposition, the question of origin, time and place, and context are merely subsidiary, the decisive question is that of their correctness (if only under the form of 'acceptability'). We will call *statement* the modality of existence proper to that group of signs: a modality that allows it to be something more than a series of traces, something more than a succession of marks on a substance, something more

> than a mere object made by a human being; a modality that allows it to be in relation with a domain of objects, to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, to be situated among other verbal performances, and to be endowed with a repeatable materiality. (*AK* 107)

There is then no formal criterion for recognising a statement, other than it is a product of a system of rules. Unfortunately for Foucault, simply examining the archive will never reveal whether an utterance is a statement or not, given this criterion. For example, "the cat is on the mat", may be a password used by spies, or it may refer to the fact that the well known boxer, nick-named "the cat", has been knocked-out. But since the rules are only the *arche* of discourse, and not the archive to which he has access, Foucault will never be able to know, for example, whether he has been privy to the world of espionage, or whether he has not just learned the fight results.

Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow call Foucault's statements "serious speech acts". They thus try to show the affinity that statements have with speech acts. They claim that both speech acts and statements are performances, and that both Searle and Foucault believe that the existence of literal meaning exempts one from having to search for a deep meaning. Searle, they say, is interested in how a hearer understands a speech act. That is done by placing the speech act in context with other related speech acts and within a

background of shared practices. Foucault, they claim, presupposes the way these common speech acts are understood, but is not interested in them. Dreyfus and Rabinow claim that, "Foucault is interested in just those types of speech acts which are divorced from the local situation of assertion and from the shared everyday background so as to constitute a relatively autonomous realm."[12] Dreyfus and Rabinow point in the right direction, there is a problem of recognition for the archaeologist, but their argument is not, I think, a good one.

The most obvious problem with making Foucault into a (serious) speech act theorist is that he rejects the central dogma of speech act theory. In traditional speech act theory the meaning of an utterance depends on the speakers intentions. Considering the social setting, the speaker chooses the appropriate locution in anticipation of the possible interpretations his intentions might be given. The audience, in turn, recognising the social setting, choose the correct interpretation, and in so doing apprehend the speaker's intentions. That is surely the antithesis of Foucault's position.

Foucault insists that statements are not the expressions of the intentions of a subject. They are instead the product of the rules of formation of discourse, and it is those rules which endow an utterance with meaning. A

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[12]Hubert Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1982, p. 48.

statement is understood by determining the position it occupies within discourse, by examining its strategic relations with the other statements of the discourse. A statement is not understood by situating it in the material world and then interpolating the speakers intentions.

It is misleading to call statements serious speech acts, for it obscures the relation between statements, propositions and especially sentences. Dreyfus and Rabinow build, I think, a straw man argument with their contention that statements are serious speech acts. They try to manoeuver Foucault into the position where he must renounce his archaeology and his anti-humanism. To support their claim Dreyfus and Rabinow quote Foucault from "The Discourse on Language". Yet Foucault's position on discourse, particularly on the question of its autonomy, is not the same in "The Discourse on Language" and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (I will argue this point more fully later.) Serious speech acts, say Dreyfus and Rabinow, are formed by passing, "some sort of institutional test, such as rules of dialectical argument, inquisitional interrogation, or empirical confirmation."[13] They then quote from "The Discourse on Language", "It is always possible one could speak the truth in a void; one would only be in the true, however, if one obeyed the rules of some discursive 'policy' which would have to be reactivated every time one spoke." (*DL* 224) Dreyfus and Rabinow cannot use this quote to

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[13]Ibid., p. 48.

support the position that in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* statements are serious speech acts. This quote runs contrary to the position there. In fact "The Discourse on Language" is a response to the unresolved problems that Foucault had with the notions of discourse and statement in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

The whole of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is dedicated to showing that any statement is a product of a system of formation. Yet Dreyfus and Rabinow quote Foucault, from "The Discourse", as saying that one can speak the truth in a void, that one can make statements outside of a system of formation. Whereas, in *The Archaeology*, Foucault actually only says that sentences can be made outside the system. This is important however, it is a chink in Foucault's armor, it raises the question of where sentences come from. I will return to this question later. In the passage quoted from "The Discourse", Foucault says that in order to be within the true, that is, to make acceptable and recognizable statements, one must conform to the existing discourse. The model is of an endless number of possible statements but of selection by discourse of what actually gets said, while every other possible utterance is repressed. This is precisely not the position of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. The systems of formation are conditions of existence, not of possibility. There are no repressed statements. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* system and discourse produce one another in discursive practice.

There is nothing lurking anterior to discourse, not even the system of formation. This creates the hermeneutical problem for Foucault that I have alluded to, and will come to shortly; he has no means of discovering either discourse or its rules of formation.

Dreyfus and Rabinow beg the question of the relationship between sentences (and propositions) and statements, by calling statements serious speech acts. Foucault nowhere refers to anything like serious speech acts, or even to non-serious speech acts. Foucault refers only to the "rarity" of statements. To call statements serious speech acts is misleading. It credits Foucault with a position that he does not hold, namely, that the whole of the linguistic field is comprised of speech acts, some serious and some not. Presumably it is the serious speech acts which are produced by the system of formation. The question remains though where the non-serious speech acts come from. Dreyfus and Rabinow confuse the issue further, for they do not say that serious speech acts are due to a system of formation, but rather they are formed by a subject obeying the rules of a discursive policy. They invoke the notion of 'obeying ' in order to charge Foucault with overlooking the question of whether his rules of formation are meant to be prescriptive or descriptive.

To posit statements as serious sppech acts is a straw man argument. Dreyfus and Rabinow construe statements as serious speech acts because it serves their argument to do

so. If he deals with serious speech acts they charge that Foucault must be able to reconize them as serious speech acts. He could not describe them otherwise they say. Their position is that Foucault cannot discover the system of formation unless he first recognizes the products of that system. He must know the meaning of the serious speech acts if he is to recognize them as such. He cannot treat serious speech acts non-seriously, that is, as meaningless traces of a system that is not itself evident. "Unless he understands the issues that concern the thinkers he studies, he will be unable to distinguish when two different utterances are the same serious speech act and when two identical utterances are different speech acts."[14]

Dreyfus and Rabinow's claim is that Foucault's concern is with serious speech acts, but that his method prevents him from dealing with them.

> Unless the investigator has access to the meaning of the activity in question he will be unable to distinguish apparent similarity of use from the kind of similarity of use which establishes that two different utterances are, in fact, identical statements. Thus being both within and outside of the discourse he studies, sharing their meaningful truth claims while suspending them, is the archaeologists ineluctable condition.

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[14]Ibid., p. 88.

> Even if serious discourse never really has the serious meaning it claims but is only the rule-governed transformation of meaningless objects, subjects, concepts and strategies which archaeology reveals it to be; even if, in the last analysis, the archaeologist's monuments turn out to have been mute all along, this much still remains true: neither the serious scientist nor the archaeologist could do their work if it weren't for the illusion that there is serious meaning. Indeed, archaeology is the discipline of listening sensitively to the very monuments one treats as mute.'[15]

There are two things wrong with this position. The first is their theory of speech acts. The second, following from the first, is that they are incorrect on the question of meaning in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. The trouble with their position is that Dreyfus and Rabinow try to make a phenomenologist out of Foucault. They claim that as an archaeologist he brackets both truth and meaning. That is a fatal mistake they say, since gathering evidence requires that the archaeologist knows the meaning of the traces; if no meaning then no statements. Dreyfus and Rabinow claim that Foucault is involved in "a double phenomenological bracketing" of both sense and reference.'[16] In fact Foucault is not bracketing meaning at all. The question is not how are statements understood, but how are statements produced.

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[15] Ibid., p. 88
[16] Ibid., p. 98.

Foucault's answer is the system of formation and not the intentional acts of subjects. Speaking of objects Foucault says his investigation is not an analysis of meaning. Such an analysis will not uncover the rules of formation which, Foucault claims, account for the production of discourse. He believes that an analysis of meaning will only remain at the level of what is at the disposal of the consciousness of the subject.

Foucault does not mention bracketing. He does not, like Husserl, have a formal method that demands that something be bracketed. Foucault merely says that an investigation of meaning will not reveal how statements are produced. He doubts the productive efficacy of intentionality. Positing a system of formation does not imply throwing out meaning. Rather it relocates the source of meaning from the subject to the system. Foucault is only in an ineluctable position if one accepts the position of Dreyfus and Rabinow. That position is that statements are serious speech acts and that Foucault brackets meaning and reference. Neither are positions that Foucault holds. It is certainly not his position that meaning is "an illusion fostered by the rule governed rarety of statements." In fact Foucault takes meaning quite seriously, it is not an illusion. He does not look below a statement to find its real meaning. He treats the statement as an "event" and wonders how it was produced. Foucault sets out to understand how statements that were once meaningful could become meaningless.

Dreyfus and Rabinow charge that Foucault has failed to distinguish prescriptive rules from descriptive rules. They charge that at one moment Foucault talks as if the rules were meant to be prescriptive and that at another that they are meant to be prescriptive. Foucault cannot have it both ways they claim, and yet his project demands that he must.

> If rules that people sometimes follow account for what gets said, are these rules meant to be descriptive, so that we should say merely that people act *according* to them, or are meant to be efficacious, so that we can say that speakers actually follow them. Foucault certainly does not want to say that the rules are followed by the speakers. The rules are not in the minds of those whose behaviour they describe.''

The rules are not in the minds of the speakers. The rules reside not in the subject but rather in discourse, hence Foucault's anti-humanism. If the rules were in the mind we would be back in the realm of transcendental constitution, a position Foucault rejects. Since the rules are not in the minds of the speakers Dreyfus and Rabinow claim that the rules cannot be prescriptive, yet Foucault says they are. They quote the following passage from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "This dispersion itself - with its gaps, its discontinuities, its entanglements, its incompatibilities, its replacements, and its substitutions - can be described

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''Ibid., p. 81.

in its uniqueness if one is able to determine the *specific rules in accordance with which* its objects, statements, concepts and theoretical options have been formed." (*AK* 81) This passage however does not imply that the rules are followed consciously.

Foucault, Dreyfus and Rabinow rightly claim, is not content simply to offer a description of the regularities found in discourse. Foucault wants to give the conditions for the actual existence of particular statements. Foucault says that the rules, that is, the discursive relations, "determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them etc. These relations characterise not the language (langue) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice." (*AK* 46) Consequently for Dreyfus and Rabinow, Foucault is in the awkward position of maintaining that while the rules are prescriptive, that is, lay down what speakers must do to form statements, they are nevertheless not in the minds of the speakers, nor even known to them. If one followed Dreyfus and Rabinow, one could say that Foucault is a Descartes in reverse. The question is not how can the cogito reach the world, but how can the world (as discourse) reach the cogito. Contra Dreyfus and Rabinow however, there is no reason to suppose that prescriptive rules must inhere in the consciousness of individuals to

insure their efficacy, nor even that the project of description precludes prescription.

Dreyfus and Rabinow themselves point to Foucault's solution. In fact though their example of an analogue of Foucault's rules is a common one in the structuralist literature; it is the example of grammar. The rules of grammar are both prescriptive and descriptive. The rules of grammar must be followed if one wants to be understood. Grammar is not consciously followed however. Nor are the rules of grammar anything like Kant's transcendental aesthetic, they are not structures of reason. Like any code, the rules of grammar, just as the rules of formation of discourse, always precede the speaker. The system determines what can count as a possible utterance of that system. The speaker must follow the determinations of the system to make statements. But it is not a conscious following, like following a recipe or a road map, it is more like riding a bicycle. It is more like a knowing how than a knowing that. A speaker follows the rules of formation the same way he follows the rules of grammar. If one allows that the rules of formation can have a similar function as the rules of grammar then the problem of prescription versus description is no longer crucial.

Actually the critique of Dreyfus and Rabinow misses the real failure of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; namely the unworkable relation between the discursive and the non-discursive. Foucault is unclear on the relation between

statements and sentences, between that which is from discourse and that which is not. He says that there are sentences and propositions, and that neither of these are statements. Yet Foucault does say that discourse is composed of statements, and that they are meaningful because they are products of a system of formation. The question then is how are sentences and propositions which are not statements meaningful.

Foucault's answer to this question is not convincing. Indeed I think this is the reason why soon after the publication of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in "The Discourse on Language", Foucault changed his position. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault said that sentences and propositions were transformed into statements.

> ...One cannot say a sentence, one cannot transform it into a statement unless a collateral space is brought into operation. (*AK* 97)
>
> The associated field that turns a sentence or a series of signs into a statement, which provides them with a particular context, a specific representative content, forms a complex web. (*AK* 99)
>
> If one can speak of a statement, it is because a sentence (a proposition) figures at a definite point, with a specific position in an enunciative network that extends beyond. (*AK* 99)

Sentences and propositions become statements when they are located in the enunciative field defined by the system

of formation. The trouble with this notion is that it must posit two domains of meaning, one for sentences and propositions and one for statements. Indeed Foucault seems to hold this position. Sentences can be meaningful in isolation, but statements rely on the context for their meaning.

> Certainly one is not very sure what a group of words like "I'll tell you that tomorrow" *means*; in any case, one can neither date this "tomorrow", nor guess what is to be said. Nevertheless, it is a perfectly delimited sentence, obeying the rules of construction of the language (langue) in which it is written. Lastly, one might object that, without a context, it is sometimes difficult to define the structure of a sentence ("I shall never know if he is dead" or "I shall never be informed of his death when this event occurs"). But this ambiguity is perfectly definable, simulataneous possibilities can be posited that belong to the structure proper of the sentence. Generally speaking, one can say that a sentence or a proposition - even when isolated, even divorced from the natural context that could throw light on to its meaning, even freed or cut off from all elements to which, implicitly or not, it refers - always remains a sentence or a proposition and can always be recognized as such. (*AK* 97)

If anything then Foucault's sentences are more like Searles

speech acts, since they always have a literal meaning, than are his statements. The role of the system seems to be subverted however. It posits a source of meaning outside the system of formation. The situation is not attenuated by pointing out that the meaning of sentences is ambiguous. How do sentences get "transformed" into statements? The suggestion seems to be that, for example, first Newton produced a set of grammatically correct laws concerning mass, which then became statements by their appropriation by discourse. This seems to be Foucault's ineluctable position, for he certainly would not want to say that, for example, Newton formulated his laws outside of the discourse present then about bodies in motion. The situation is that meaningful, though ambiguous sentences are produced apart from the system of formation. Given Foucault's notion of system though, even statements cannot be devoid of ambiguity. In a system meaning can never be fixed. The relations between elements in a system are endless, hence the meaning of a statement can never be fixed. One has only to examine even some of Foucault's own examples of statements to see that their meaning is clearly ambiguous. This problem of sentences and statements is really just part of the more crucial problem of the relation of the discursive and the non-discursive. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault denies any efficacious role to the non-discursive in discourse. He grudgeingly relents somewhat in "The Discourse on Language" however. A comparrisson of

"The Discourse on Language" and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* will reveal the scope of the difficulty in the latter regarding the question of the relation of discourse and non-discourse.

VII. The Re-emergence of Man

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault wants to account for the production of discourse without reducing it to either the product of a subject or to the effects of institutions. His position is that discourse is determined by rules which are not accessible to the subject. Foucault believes that an explication of those rules will reveal how discourse produces itself. To get at those rules he first had to clear away the traditional unities of discourse such as "oeuvre", and "book" which are tied to the subject and do not really account for the unity and existence of discourse anyway, according to him. Instead Foucault proposes the rules of formation of discourse. Such a project is faced with the danger of lapsing into materialism. If you reject humanism what is the alternative - materialism? Foucault says no. Discourse is produced by itself, and not by the material conditions of life. Ironically the greatest threat to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is materialism and not humanism. Humanism is disposed of in chapter one of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; it is the spectre of materialism that haunts the rest of the book.

The question of humanism versus materialism hinges on the relation of discourse and non-discourse. Having discarded any form of humanism Foucault must guard himself against the charge of materialism, since if it is not man who produces and organises discourse, it must be institutions. Institutions embodying the material conditions

of life are the infrastructure and discourse is the superstructure. Foucault's tactical response, to preserve his claim that discourse produces itself, is to claim that institutions are subordinated to discourse. He has a difficult time justifying that position. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* the non-discursive is uneasy in its servile position, and it begins to reassert itself in "The Discourse on Language". Non-discursive practices and events are freed from their subordinate position, though only in an attenuated fashion. In later works they assume their full independence however.

The question is why does Foucault not adopt historical materialism. Historical materialism is also anti-humanistic seeing history as a rule governed process. The answer to that question no doubt has a lot to do with the peculiar history of philosophy in contemporary France, and also with the now famous "events of May" in 1968. About the history of philosophy in France, Foucault writes in "The Discourse on Language", "our age, whether through logic or epistemology, whether through Marx of through Nietzche, is attempting to flee Hegel..." (*DL* 235) Historical materialism relied too much on Hegel. It was riddled with too many problematic notions, for example, "dialectic", "class consciousness", "class struggle", "history", etc. The conception of history engendered in historical materialism was one Foucault rejected in *The Order of Things*, and continued to disavow in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. That was the history of

continuity. It always involves a humanism, whether actual or promised at some later date. Most damning of all for historical materialism in France, was its complete failure to predict or explain the events of May, 1968. In May of 1968 in France workers and students paralysed the country. The Communist Party found itself completely unprepared for what happened and was consigned with the government to the role of spectator, it was unable to explain what was happening. The Communists' cherished infrastructure/superstructure distinction had failed them. The communists could find nothing in the infrastructure that could explain the uprising. Not only could they not explain the time table of events (revolution was not expected for quite some time), but they could also not explain the new class alignments. It was not a struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoise. They were unable to explain the class interests of groups they had never taken cognizance of before; for example, feminists, homosexuals and students. In the advent of the events of May, Rolande Barthes succinctly identified the challenge of what now had to be thought by the French intellectals. "How can the two great *epistemes* of modernity, the materialist dialectic and the Freudian dialectic, be brought together so as to fuse and produce a new order of human relations..? This is the problem we have posed for ourselves."[18] What Barthes demands is that the crude and failed anti-huamanism of historical materialism be

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[18]Descombes, Ibid., p. 172.

modified by the anti-humanism of Freud. Alone neither are sufficient, neither can explain the historicity of events. I think that Foucault's efforts in *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and "The Discourse on Language", can be situated within Barthes' imperative. Foucault sought the "positive unconscious", as he put it, in the production of knowledge. Such a project required that he subordinate non-discourse as the material conditions of life, to discourse. The changes in Foucault's position indicate that he was not successful in repelling materialism.''

"The Discourse on Language" appears as an appendix in the English translation of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. "The Discourse on Language" was Foucault's inaugural address to the College de France in 1970, and was published in 1971. It therefore follows the publication of *The Archaeology of*

''Dominique Lecourt believes that had Foucault been consistent he would have embraced historical materialism. She treats *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as a sort of prolegomena to any future historical materialism. (Dominique Lecourt, *Marxism and Epistemology*, London, New Left Books, 1977, pp. 189-190.)
I believe that Lecourt is correct about the presence of the formative elements of a historical materialism in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. I think Lecourt is wrong about the failure of the book though.

According to Lecourt what the work lacks is a class point of view. Foucault would agree that a class point of view is absent from *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, but he would not agree that it is missing. What Foucault demonstrates in both *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is the poverty of any explanation that has recourse only to worn out notions of class and class struggle. Foucault is not oblivious to the role of class, but he does not see it as a fruitful explanation of discourse. Foucault points instead to many other determinants of discourse that have nothing at all to do with class, and to motors of change that have nothing to do with class struggle.

Knowledge by two years, yet it is appended with good reason. "The Discourse on Language" incorporates both an addition to, and a modification of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. It is an admission that all is not well with that book. In "The Discourse on Language" Foucault relents somewhat on the autonomy of discourse by granting to the non-discursive its own degree of autonomy. Nevertheless Foucault's basic position remains unchanged; one must look outside of the subject to account for knowledge.

"The Discourse on Language" is a transition work. It begins Foucault's musings on power. Foucault lays out the thesis of "The Discourse".

> I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. (*DL* 216)

From this the relation between *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse" is clear. The problem is still the production of discourse, the explanation given by phenomenology is still rejected along with humanism, but the solution of a self-regulating and self-producing discourse is given up. Foucault now admits to the role of institutions, that is, the non-discursive, in the formation of discourse. It seems now Foucault is tending to a more materialist account of knowledge and of man. In *The Archaeology* discourse produces

itself. Non-discursive factors do not play a determining role. The threat of materialism is thereby avoided. In "The Discourse" however non-discursive factors have been rehabilitated. In "The Discourse" Foucault wrote,

> There are, of course, many other systems for the control and delimitation of discourse. Those I have spoken of up to now (the rules of exclusion)[20] are, to some extent, active on the exterior; they concern that part of discourse which deals with power and desire.
>
> I believe we can isolate another group: internal rules, where discourse exercises its own control; rules concerned with the principles of classification, ordering and distribution. It is as though we were now involved in the mastery of another dimension of discourse: that of events and chance. (*DL* 220)

This last sentence is important. Foucault is involved in some scholarly self-revision. The whole of *The Archaeology* sought to treat discourse as a event. By "event" Foucault means that discourse or statements should not be regarded as signs of something else, for example, the intentions of speakers or the material conditions of life. In *The Archaeology* then the non-discursive was dealt with by absorbing it into the discursive. Now Foucault is saying that the event is only one dimension of discourse. He seems

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[20] brackets mine

to be saying that all things said about statements in *The Archaeology* were true, but that they were not all that was true about statements. The non-discursive could not be held in check by the discursive in *The Archaeology* and is on the rise in "The Discourse".

The system of exclusion that Foucault outlines in "The Discourse" is non-discursive. The rules of exclusion point to, he claims, a new dimension of statements. That new dimension represents a dramatic change in Foucault's position however. The production of discourse is now due to factors both inside and outside of discourse. In "The Discourse" the non-discursive is re-admitted and Foucault scrambles to maintain the position that discourse is still the same sort of event it was in *The Archaeology*. Clearly it is not however.

In "The Discourse" Foucault outlines three groups of rules that control and produce discourse. The first group of rules Foucault calls the rules of exclusion, the second are the internal rules of statements considered as events; these rules are concerned with "principles of classification, ordering and distribution", and finally there are those rules which determine the conditions under which a certain discourse may be employed.

The exact role and nature of the rules of exclusion is problematic. They are not discursive relations. They are repressive non-discursive rules which check the fecundity of the discursive rules. Such a division between non-discursive

rules which repress and discursive rules which create is impossible to maintain however. Discursive rules also check discourse and non-discursive rules also create discourse as Foucault makes clear. Later, in an interview in 1977, Foucault dismissed the theory of power that gave the rules of exclusion their peculiar efficacy.

> I think that in *The Order of Discourse*[21] I conflated two concepts, or rather that for what I take to be a legitimate problem (that of articulating the data of discourse with the mechanism of power) I provided an inadequate solution. It was a piece I wrote at a moment of transition. Till then, it seems to me, I accepted the traditional conception of power as an essentially judicial mechanism, as that which lays down the law, which prohibits, which refuses, and which has a whole range of negative effects: exclusion, rejection, denial, obstruction, occultation, etc. Now I believe that conception to be invalid. (*PK 183*)

In writings following "The Discourse" Foucault insists on the productive nature of non-discursive power.

Rules of exclusion control the production of discourse. They repress production but do not produce themselves. In later works the rules of exclusion were made productive. Granting to the non-discursive productive power entirely subverts the project of *The Archaeology*. As a transition

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[21]The French title of "The Discourse on Language" is *L'ordre du Discours*.

work one sees the beginning of that subversion already in "The Discourse". This all points to the uneasy replacement of man by discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

In "The Discourse" there is a second group of rules, internal rules, which properly produce discourse. These rules are themselves discursive. They, supposedly, are not the embodiment of power in non-discursive phenomena. They are not like institutions, for example, inscribing their effects in discourse. These rules are already discursive, in that sense they are internal. In *The Archaeology* the whole of discourse was accounted for by internal rules. The non-discursive there functions only in as much as it is appropriated by discourse and made discursive. This is not the case in "The Discourse".

In "The Discourse" Foucault wants to have internal rules producing discourse, and non-discursive rules of exclusion which hold in check the internal rules. In *The Archaeology* there is a complete reduction of the non-discursive to the discursive. In "The Discourse" Foucault returns to the non-discursive some of its autonomy. But autonomy must be complete or not at all. "The Discourse" heralds the demise of *The Archaeology*, while it parades as only a modification of it.

In *The Archaeology* Foucault is not entirely clear on how the non-discursive is appropriated by the discourse. Indeed that is the major problem with the book. In "The Discourse" the non-discursive is freed from the discursive,

but it is also disarmed so to speak. If discourse is to be an autonomous, self-regulating and self-generating phenomenon, as Foucault insists it is in *The Archaeology*, then the non-discursive must be brought within the fold of the discursive. The task is to locate such things as institutions, social practices, subjects, objects, etc., within discourse. The unsolved problem of *The Archaeology* is how exactly it is that the non-discursive becomes discursive. One sees in the changes that appear in "The Discourse" how pressing this problem is.

In "The Discourse" only three internal rules are given; the "principle of commentary", the "author principle", and the "discipline principle". They are referred to varingly as "principles", "rules", "principles of limitation", "principles of rarefaction", and "systems of control". The rules point to the change in position between *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse".

Through commentary an enormous discourse is created, namely, the world of secondary sources. Commentary is not however always subservient to the primary text. Commentary has its own value, often supplanting the value of the primary text. Commentary sanctions the creation of a new discourse. The capacity for commentary is endless. The paradox of commentary however is that it is aimed at ending commentary. The aim is to say once and for all that the text actually means without having explicitly said it. Commentary is therefore a principle of rarefaction, not just anything

can be commentary. An odd sort of fidelity to the text is required. One must repeat the text without reciting it.

The author as a principle of rarefaction is a complement to the principle of commentary. By 'author' Foucault does not mean the historical personage who penned the text. The author is the principle of unity of a group of writings. Many writings, remarks etc. do not rely on an author for their meaning. In modern science, for example, it hardly matters who the author of a paper is, though in literature a great deal of energy is expended (uselessly, Foucault would say) evoking the meaning of a text from knowledge of its author's identity.

Foucault is only interested in the author function. The author-function is a principle of rarefaction of discourse. It is from the author, in this sense, that the oeuvre is formed. "It is from his new position, as an author, that he will fashion - from all he might have said, from all he says daily, at any time - the still shaky profile of his oeuvre." (*DL* 222) For example, no doubt during his life-time Shakespeare said and wrote a great deal, but Shakespeare's shopping list does not belong in his collected works. As an author Shakespeare said and wrote substantially less. The author who wrote "The Tempest" is not the same man who married Anne Hatheway. It is as an author that Shakespeare's oeuvre appears. The author-function rarefies his discourse. As an author Shakespeare had to fashion his work within the constraints of what was literaryly acceptable and available.

For example, Shakespeare's sonnets have far less to do with the expression of some lived-through experience of his, than they have to do with the way in which poetry could be written in the sixteenth century.

While the oeuvre was suspended as a principle of unity in *The Archaeology* Foucault did leave the way open for its later rehabilitation. He criticises the obviousness with which the oeuvre is accepted, as if it were entirely unproblematic. Speaking of the oeuvre and the book Foucault says in *The Archaeology*, "Should we never make use of them, even as temporary support and never provide them with a definition? What we must do, in fact is to tear away from them their virtual self-evidence, and to free the problems they pose..." (*AK* 26) The oeuvre has reentered the field as a principle of unity, but it could only do so under the auspices of a refined theory of the author. Whereas the oeuvre represents a continuity between *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse", the notion of discipline marks a separation between them.

Foucault now prefers the term 'discipline' to the term 'science'. We can recognize and label a discipline if we can catalogue the objects referred to, methods used, etc. in that discipline. The objects, methods, true propositions, rules, techniques, etc. constitute a system. This is not the same position as that found in *The Archaeology* however. In "The Discourse" Foucault says that for a discipline to exist there must be the possibility of framing an endless number

of propositions. Consequently the discipline principle always opposes the commentary principle.

The introduction of propositions into disciplines in "The Discourse" is significant. Foucault holds that with regard to propositions, the division between true and false is strict. There is a new conception of discipline in "The Discourse". Foucault now seems to be equivocating on 'statement' and 'proposition'.

> In a discipline, unlike in commentary, what is supposed at the point of departure is not some meaning which must be rediscovered, nor an identity to be reiterated; it is that which is required for the construction of new statements. For a discipline to exist, there must be the possibility of formulating - and of doing so ad infinitum - fresh propositions. (*DL* 223)

This is very important. Afterall the whole of *The Archaeology* is aimed at getting clear on statements. There Foucault explicitly states that propositions are not equivalent to statements. "I do not think that the necessary and sufficient condition of a statement is the presence of a defined propositional structure, or that one can speak of statements only when there is a proposition." (*DL* 80) The distance between the two works grows wider.

In "The Discourse" the rules of exclusion were external to discourse. The principle of commentary, the author and the discipline, are all internal rules. There is also a

third group of rules controlling discourse. They are the rules which determine who may employ a particular discourse. Foucault says that these rules are neither external and linked to power or desire, nor internal. These rules effect a rarefaction among speakers. They are the "verbal rituals, 'fellowships of discourse', doctrinal groups and social appropriation." (*DL* 227) It is an indication that Foucault is having problems with his topology of discourse that this third group of rules is not granted a location, especially as they were deemed internal rules in *The Archaeology*. Furthermore Foucault now moves some of the rules that were inside of discourse in *The Archaeology* to the outside of discourse in "The Discourse". In so doing he subverts the entire topology of discourse outlined in *The Archaeology*.

In *The Archaeology* there are discursive formations composed of statements controlled by rules internal to discourse. In "The Discourse" there are disciplines composed of propositions/statements produced and controlled by internal and external rules, and also by a third group of rules which are neither internal nor external. Disciplines are defined by objects, methods, true propositions etc. Discursive formations are unified in an entirely different manner than are disciplines. Discourse is not defined in *The Archaeology* by objects, methods, etc., but rather by the "space", or rules, that make them possible. Disciplines and discourse have little in common.

Each of the four groups of rules in *The Archaeology* are discovered by describing the way statements appear. To describe the formation of objects we were to;

1. Map the surface of emergence.
2. Describe the the authority of delimitation.
3. Analyse the grids of specification.

With regard to the formation of enunciative modalities we had to;

1. Ask who has the right to speak.
2. Determine in which institutional setting the discourse is legitimate.
3. Discover the role of the subject in each particular setting, whether it is as an observer, a listener etc.

Regarding the formation of concepts we must consider the organisation in which statements appear. This involves;

1. Examining discourse as a rule governed series of statements in which concepts appear as elements of that discourse distributed in that series.
2. Examining the "enunciative field" to determine the forms of coexistence among statements, for example, relations of dominance, concomitance, shared history, etc.
3. Defining the "procedures of intervention" that can be applied to statements. This involves determining the legitimate modification and appropriation of existing statements into a new discursive formation.

With regard to the formation of strategies we must determine the system in which those strategies are deployed for

discourse to be individualised. One must therefore;

1. Determine the points of diffraction of discourse. These include points of incompatibility, equivalence and systematization.
2. Study the "economy of discursive constellation", that is, the relation that one discourse has with others.
3. Study the "'function' of the discourse in a field of non-discursive practices."

Foucault says that the four groups of rules so discovered are not formed at the level of institutions, and inscribed by force on the surface of discourse. These rules "reside in discourse itself". The difference between this long list of internal rules and those of "The Discourse" is striking.

To see further the difference between *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse" (and thereby the problems with the former) it is fruitful to determine what Foucault means by rules "residing" in discourse. He tries to clarify this point in the chapter on "The Formation of Objects". What he says there applies to the other rules as well. The rules do not constitute the object. They are not present in the object, but they allow the object to appear. They allow the object to be spoken about, "to be placed in a field of exteriority." Foucault distinguishes these rules, or relations, from what he calls primary and secondary relations. Primary and secondary relations are non-discursive. Primary relations would be relations between, for example, the family and the court system.

Secondary relations might be what psychiatrists say about the relations between the family and criminality. Discursive relations differ from both of these.

Discursive relations are not internal to discourse in the sense of linking concepts to words. They do not form a kind of meta-language. Discursive relations do not constitute a deductive or rhetorical structure between propositions or sentences. Discursive relations are not internal to discourse, but nor are they outside of it:

> They are, in some sense at the limit of discourse: they offer it objects of which it can speak, or rather (for this image of offering presupposes that objects are formed independently of discourse), they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this of that object, in order to deal with them, name them, explain them etc. These relations characterise not the language (langue) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice. (*AK* 46)

Foucault wants to avoid what could be called a crude Marxism. He does not want discourse to be conceived of as a superstructure, causally determined by an infrastructure that is non-discursive. Nevertheless because Foucault could not adequately explain how rules reside in discourse he had to alter his position. That has great consequences for the anti-humanism he proposed in *The Order of Things*.

The interior and exterior of discourse are not analogous in *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse". Primary, secondary and discursive relations determine the topology of discourse in *The Archaeology*. Primary relations are those that exist between institutions, techniques etc., regardless of the discursive relations. Even though they are formulated in discourse, secondary relations are not properly discursive. Secondary relations are commentary on primary relations, while discursive relations are the ground for both of them.

Foucault's division between primary, secondary and discursive relations is not altogether satisfactory. The question remains why are not primary relations discursive relations. Why is it that some relations are rules of formation and other are not? In later works, *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*, for example, Foucault's project was to show just how the discourse on crime and sex was formed by what he had called primary and secondary relations. Discourse is no longer *causa sui*.

The relation between the discursive and the non-discursive in *The Archaeology* is further complicated by the notion of the "pre-discursive". Foucault says that the rules of formation are not outside of discourse, they do not transcribe themselves onto the surface of discourse. The rules are immanent in discourse. The problem is however that everything seems to be inside of discourse. Somehow even non-discursive practices belong to discourse.

> Behind the completed system, what is discovered by the analysis of formations is not the bubbling source of life itself, life in an as yet uncaptured state; it is an immense density of systematicities, a tight group of multiple relations. Moreover, these relations cannot be the very web of the text - they are not by nature foreign to discourse. They can certainly be qualified as "prediscursive", but only if one admits that this prediscursive is still discursive, that is, that they do not specify a thought, or a consciousness, or a group of representations which *a posteriori*, and in a way that is never quite necessary, are transcribed into discourse; but that they characterise certain levels of discourse, that they define rules that are embodied as a particular practice by discourse. One is not seeking, therefore, to pass from the text to thought, from talk to silence, from exterior to the interior, from spatial dispersion to the pure recollection of the moment, from superficial multiplicity to profound unity. One remains within the dimension of discourse. (*AK* 76)

When Foucault calls a practice or relation non-discursive therefore, one should not think that it is alien to discourse. This is precisely the position that Foucault failed to establish however, and if he had it would render his notion of discourse useless anyway. Such a broad

conception of discourse would make quantum mechanics into a discourse on par with the polite discourse used at parties. In that case every utterance would count as a statement, and yet that is a position Foucault vehemently rejects.

By the end of "The Discourse" Foucault has effectively scuttled the project of *The Archaeology*. Like man, discourse has been dispersed. Just as man could not be both the opaque object investigated as well as the condition of possibility of that investigation which sought the complete clarification of his being, so too could discourse not be both the obscure object of investigation and also the condition of the possibility of that investigation. (In this regard one can note Foucault's rejection of Heidegger's hermeneutics which attempted to expose man from within all that which overshadowed him.) Foucault could not show how discourse alone, as a rule governed body of statements, could exist alongside of non-discourse (in the form of institutions or subjects, for example) and taking account of them, still produce itself. He was forced in fact to evade their effect by making them into the pre-discursive and by subsequently declaring that the pre-discursive always belongs to the discursive. But then everything becomes discourse and the exercise is rendered meaningless.

Until now I have dwelt on the internal inconsistencies of Foucault's account of discourse. Now I want to consider an external argument which may account for his internal muddle. Foucault's topology of discourse does not adequately

clarify the ontological status of the rules of formation. The rules are *a priori*, but also historical. They are necessary, but not transcendentally necessary, even though they determine what can count as knowledge. Foucault could therefore be called a Kantian without a transcendental subject. Foucault is in a similar position to Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*. A major problem with the *Tractatus* is that Wittgenstein provides a transcendental logic (proposition 6:13) but no transcendental subject. Kant, on the other hand, recognised that his transcendental categories required a transcendental subject as the bearer of those categories. The truth of the categories was in turn demonstrated by their transcendental deduction. Foucault's rules are not transcendental, of course, they are not atemporal and universal the way Kant's categories are. But just as Kant's categories separate knowledge from illusion, similarly, do Foucault's rules separate discourse from non-discourse.

Discourse, like the humanist's man, is therefore a paradoxical object. It is a quasi-transcendental logic located in a quasi-transcendental subject which produces itself as an object according to its own rules. Like the humanist's man, discourse is its own maker and its own norm. It is the measure of all things. Ironically, with his criticism of man, Foucault has taught us to be suspicious of such an account of discourse. Discourse too seems to be an empirico-transcendental doublet.[22]

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[22]Both Colin Gordon, and Dreyfus and Rabinow make this point as well.

In trying to circumvent this pitfall it seems that Foucault does not escape a tacit reference to truth which has nothing to do with discourse. Afterall he is not in the same position as Chomsky, for example, who can claim that the validity of the rules, which he finds determines what gets said, is proven by their instantiation in the brain. Nor like the behaviourists can Foucault claim that his rules garner their validity as reinforced behaviour patterns, nor by belonging to some Marxist economic infrastructure. Chomsky, Kant and the behaviourists and Marxists can distinguish discourse from non-discourse by pointing to the validity of the rules which produce discourse. Foucault's position is more awkward. He claims to have discovered his rules as regularities within discourse, but he does not claim that their validity determines the truth of discourse. (Foucault pointedly calls *The Order of Things*, *An* Archaeology of Knowledge.) Nevertheless though, Foucault's examples of discourse do tell us how things are in the world, and it is here, perhaps, where the covert reference to truth lies.

Discourse tells us about the world, whereas, according to Foucault, sentences do not. This bifurcation between sentences and statements and the belief that discourse describes the world, requires, despite Foucault, a prior ontological committment. A minimal ontology of world and truthful description is required. Otherwise discourse and non-discourse would be indistinguishable. Despite his

archaeological pretensions, the discourses Foucault describes are not something he merely finds. The archaeologist requires a committment to truth in order to recognise an artifact, and to recognise it as truly that artifact and as truly belonging to that discourse. It is not a question of (futilely) attempting such a recognition in the light of a suspension of meaning and truth, as Dreyfus and Rabinow claim. The problem is rather, that having refused both humanism and materialism, Foucault must nevertheless still distinguish discourse and non-discourse, and do so without validating the discovered rules of formation by pointing to the truths arrived at by following them. Such a procedure would undermine discourse's right to be its own norm of truth by refering to a validation procedure that can do without discourse.

Foucault's position on discourse is reminiscent of Spinoza's on truth. For Spinoza truth is its own norm. For Foucault the truth of discourse (in the dual sense of what it is truly about, and what truly belongs to it) is detemined by discourse itself. Discourse replaces truth and becomes its own norm. But Foucault therefore finds himself in the same difficulty as Spinoza. It is the difficulty of recognising the true (or discourse) without external reference; for example, to a notion of coherence or correspondance or even to the intentions of speakers. It is only by invoking a monistic ontology that Spinoza can explain how a man, who hitherto did not know the true, can

come to know it, if truth is its own norm. In explaining how it is that he, as an investigator, can distinguish discourse from non-discourse, when discourse is its own norm, Foucault likewise finds himself collapsing everything into discourse.

Admittedly though Foucault does try to get around this problematic reliance on the validity of the rules of formation. He must do so because an external notion of truth would rival the rules of formation as the criterion for the membership of statements in their proper discourse. Foucault does not have to claim that the rules are valid, because the world and discourse are not two separate things, (just as in Spinoza ideas and bodies are not different things, thus explaining how a mind can truly know a body; namely, because the mind *is* the idea of the body). The point of the rules of formation is to show that the world is a product of discourse. But in that case, as we have also seen, the distinction between discourse and non-discourse disappears, and Foucault's project is subverted. In fact though, Foucault does lucidly describe a number of discourses and he does enhance our understanding of the world. One must conclude therefore that Foucault is not following his own advice in looking for the rules of formation, and is in fact operating with an idea of what truly belongs to discourse and what truly does not belong, and is ignoring the rules of formation which he claims lie in discourse itself.

Not only does Foucault share Spinoza's problem of discovering the truth once it has been made its own norm, he

also shares Spinoza's difficulty of accounting for error, or falsity. The difficulty in Spinoza follows from his ontology. For every body there is a corresponding idea which is a perfect expression of that body. Spinoza concludes that no simple idea is ever false, only incorrectly formed complex ideas can be so. With an "improvement of the understanding" error is avoided. One must pay attention to what is given in the understanding, and not contaminate it with what comes from the imagination. Foucault seems to have no way around a similar unhappy explanation. If all statements come from discourse, they should all be true. Error can only be a failure to recognize what is truly a product of the rules of formation and what is not. Not only is this an inadequate account of falsity, but it is, as we have seen, an impossible task, since Foucault's account of discourse precludes such a recognition.

What this indicates is that Foucault is insensitive to the role of truth in investigation and, therefore, in understanding as well. I think he is correct about the role of truth in the production of truth though. One can produce statements without any thought about how statements can be true. One does not need a theory of truth to produce true statements. I think Foucault's rules of formation do indicate the prodigious machinery involved in making statements, and do decentre the subject. Foucault should be commended for working out specifically,, what others left to be vaguely called "forms of life", "paradigms", etc. What

Foucault does not realize is that he needs a notion of truth, other than discourse itself, to be able to understand discourse and to distinguish it from non-discourse, and to be able to distinguish one discourse from another. Without this other notion of truth Foucault would not be able to function as an archaeologist. Since Foucault does not know the rules of formation prior to his investigation, he cannot rely on them to tell him whether an utterance is a statement about how the world is, or whether it is just idle chatter, for example. He must in fact begin his investigation with a view of what the world truly is, and how it is that statements can say how things truly are in the world. I think this indicates that man cannot be altogether decentered.

VIII. Conclusion

In *The Order of Things* Foucault explicitly declared his anti-humanism. There he maintained that "man" was only a brief rupture in the history of western thought. Man was constituted by a particular discourse at the end of the eighteenth century. Man became a subject then because truth required a ground. Language, which had previously sustained truth, was no longer capable of doing so. Unfortunately sustaining truth required that man become a peculiar type of subject. Man had to be more than merely an empirical subject. Truth required that man be a transcendental subject as well. Man therefore became that paradoxical empirico-transcendental doublet that Foucault describes. By becoming this doublet man's hegemony was assured; nothing eluded him. Man became the measure of all things, and humanism was upon us. By determining the internal inconsistencies of this model of man, by deconstructing it, Foucault justified his anti-humanism. He showed that it is impossible to explain man in the manner of Kant and those coming after him who also took the transcendental turn. He showed further that such an empirico-transcendental object can never be an object for science. It is folly to speak of a human *science*, and it is pernicious anyway.

Foucault's anti-humanism is not therefore directed only to the philosophy characterised by the doubles he catalogues. His work has a political import as well. Perhaps that is even the most significant aspect of his work. He is

wary of the attempt to discover the 'truth' about man. Under the guise of humanism, Foucault believes that the invocation of man's truth has effected a greater and greater domination of men. The ideology of humanism is pernicious. Granting to man the ability to possess a transparent ego which he creates for and by himself helps bolster an insidious individualism. The abnormal therefore becomes guilty. In the essence of his being man is cut off from the 'other'. Foucault sought in "the death of man" and the birth of discourse a way around this pernicious humanism.

Because man's replacement is discourse, Foucault's ineluctable position is, that on the one hand he tries to draw limits to it (it is about statements, not sentences or propositions, and concerns discursive relations, not primary or secondary relations), and on the other hand he claims that discourse is limitless (one always "remains within the dimension of discourse"). Foucault's dilemma is the inevitable result of his attempt to refuse both humanism and materialism. Neither man nor matter is primary, but rather discourse. Traditionally the choice was between man and matter, either subjectivity or the material conditions of life explained knowledge, culture, ideology, etc. Discourse must address itself to both man and matter therefore, and dispose of both of them. Foucault does not have recourse to a reduction of one to the other. Foucault does not succeed in showing though how there can be both discourse and non-discourse, while we nevertheless always remain within

discourse. "The Discourse on Language" marks the beginning of the demise of Foucault's belief that man can be replaced by language.

Man, we are told, was born in the wake of the dispersion of language. The re-emergence of language as a *sui generis* system of signs signals the imminent dispersion of man. Language, and not man, becomes the ground of knowledge. In *The Archaeology* and "The Discourse", Foucault tried to show how exactly language would oust man from his seat of privileged ground.

Like *The Archaeology*, "The Discourse" is an attempt to give the principles for the proper description of the production of knowledge. The difference between the two works is that while *The Archaeology* focusses on the internal rules of discourse, "The Discourse" concentrates on the constraining forces acting on discourse. In both works though Foucault tries to account for the order in discourse.

In "The Discourse" Foucault locates his theory of discourse within a theory of power. There the fundamental theme of his later works is expressed, namely, that there is an essential connection between the production of discourse and the exercise of power. The regulation of discourse exhibits the effects of control and delimitation. The limits of discourse, or the areas into which it may not stray, are demarcated by practices of exclusion. Not every topic may be talked about, there are taboos on sex and politics for example. Certain speakers are excluded from discourse, for

example, madmen, heretics and non-experts. Finally some statements are excluded because they are deemed false. There are also structural principles interior to discourse which determine the status of statements. These are the relations of primary to secondary texts; the principle of commentary, the unities established by the identity of the author; the author principle, and the unities established by the coherence of disciplines; the discipline principle. As well qualifications are demanded of the speakers of discourse. These include; participation in rituals, membership in peculiar groups, belief in particular doctrines, and special requirements demanded by the social appropriation of discourse.

"The Discourse" is not a total rejection of *The Archaeology* however. The thematisation of power in "The Discourse" is what sets the two works apart. Given the normalising tendency of humanism it is not surprising that Foucault felt compelled to examine the role played by power in the production of knowledge. It is afterall a standard ruse, and one which Foucault later examined in *Discipline and Punish*, to justify the exertion of power by an appeal to so-called humanitarian ideals.

It is because the notion of power was absent from *The Archaeology* that Foucault could reduce everything to discourse, and because he maintained that discourse was its own norm of truth. Considering the social function of discourse later he was obliged to pose the question of

power. Non-discourse therby regained its autonomy, and Foucault had to renege on a major feature of his anti-humanism, namely, that discourse is inclusive of that which is not discourse. In so doing Foucault must give up his topology of discourse and the notion of truth which sustained it. Even in "The Discourse" though power was not intergrated within the system of the production of discourse. Power was regarded as a repressive, negative force, curtailing discourse without producing it. Power is thematised as a system of exclusion. In works following "The Discourse" Foucault gave up that conception of power, consequently discourse was even further disenfranchised. In *The Order of Things* Foucault predicted that the strident re-emergence of language heralded the death of man. But in fact language has not ascended to its throne, and the subject therefore remains at liberty.

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